THE INVISIBLE 'HAND' BEHIND

SAFFRON TERRORISM

ANUP SARDESAI

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Anup Sardesai

This book is dedicated to

Over 400,000 undertrials .....

who are languishing in various

Indian jails without trial.

Their only crime is .....

they could not hire a lawyer .....

who charged them .....

Rs. 5 million per hearing.

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PEGADAS

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About the Author

Anup Sardesai was born in a highly educated family hailing from the small coastal village Candolim in the western Indian province of Goa.

A Mechanical Engineer by profession, Anup Sardesai had a deep passion for carrying out historical research. After opting for voluntary retirement from his government job, he dedicated his entire time in carrying out historical research.

Since 2010, Anup Sardesai has carried out extensive research without the help of any institution on "**Distorted History of India**" by '**Leftist Propagandists**'.

This is his second book as a writer. His first book "**Nathuram Godse: The Hidden Truth Revealed**" created national headlines in 2016 as it uncovered the truth behind the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi that lay hidden for almost seventy years.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I thank all those who stood behind me in my difficult times.

I am thankful to my wife and son who have patiently tolerated my absence in their lives while I was writing this book.

I am beholden to my parents and in-laws who kept encouraging me despite of repeated failures in life.

I am grateful to all my friends on the social media who have provided me with valuable inputs which helped me immensely.

Last but not the least I thank the reader for showing interest in my book.

Anup Sardesai

By the Author

From childhood to youth and to adulthood, I have always considered myself fortunate and blessed to have been born in this "*Timeless Vedic Civilization*" known to many as the Hindu Religion or Sanatan Dharma. It was a sense of immense pride and honor to be a part of the most tolerant and peaceful civilizations in the world today.

Since childhood, we grew up listening to fascinating stories of the courage and bravery of iconic warriors like Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Prithviraj Chauhan & Rana Pratap.

We also were told numerous stories about barbaric Muslim rulers like Babur, Aurangzeb & Mohammed Ghori and the brutality they inflicted on the Hindu community during their five hundred year rule in India.

As a child, I always said to myself "*How fortunate I am to have been born in such a cultured & civilized community and not a barbaric community like Islam*".

However, this belief that I had nurtured since childhood was shattered when I read in the newspapers about the alleged involvement of some Hindu radical groups in various terror attacks which took place in India in 2007.

I was beginning to feel let down by the people of my own community. It was hard to believe that Hindus could commit such gruesome acts.

But, it was not until 2014 when I happened to be in Poona in connection with a business deal. There, I accidentally met a person who was falsely implicated and was in jail for almost 4 years in connection with a blast that took place at a mosque in Nanded, Maharashtra in 2004.

During his time in jail, he came in direct contact with the arrested members of Hindu organizations who were accused of plotting the terror attacks of 2007. I talked to this man from Poona for hours and he explained to me the entire truth behind the "*Saffron Terror*" conspiracy.

I was shocked and pained to discover that the lives of twelve innocent people were ruined just because a handful of self-serving politicians wanted to woo a lucrative vote bank in the run up to the general elections of 2009.

These findings resulted in a strong determination within me to thoroughly research the entire "*Saffron Terror*" conspiracy and uncover the whole truth.

My endeavors got a major boost in March 2016 when I went to Mumbai for the promotion of my book '*Nathuram Godse*'. There, I met a man who happened to be an ex-officer of the ATS and one of our close relatives.

We had a long conversation and talked on several issues including my first book.

Then, I casually asked him "*Is the Saffron Terror conspiracy real?*"

He spontaneously answered "*No, it is a conspiracy hatched by the Maharashtra ATS in connivance with the Government of India of which I too was a part of*"

I was taken aback by that answer. Thereafter, this former ATS officer provided me valuable information regarding the plotting and execution of the entire '*Saffron Terror*' conspiracy.

In the months to follow, I collected a vast amount of data, met the family members and legal advisors of all the people accused in this case.

They provided me vital inputs as to how the accused were treacherously abducted and forced to give confession by the ATS using third decree torture methods.

After gathering all the data, I compiled it in the form of this book "**THE INVISIBLE 'HAND' BEHIND ..... SAFFRON TERRORISM**"

The world is a dangerous place .....

not because of those

who do evil,

but, because of those.....

who look on

and do nothing.

Albert Einstien

Introduction

Communal violence between Hindus and Muslims is not a new phenomenon in India. This country has witnessed numerous incidents of communal violence since its independence in 1947. In fact, both India and Pakistan were bye-products of the biggest bloodbath ever in the history of mankind.

Since independence, communal violence in India has often been the outcome of local disputes between Hindu and Muslim communities over sharing the same ground for religious ceremonies or some petty quarrels.

However, apart from stray incidents of communal violence, Hindus and Muslims of India have never indulged in organized criminal acts intended at killing each other.

However, the barbaric ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus by Islamic radicals in 1991 followed by the demolition of a disputed structure at Ayodhya in 1992 saw Hindu-Muslim relations in India reach its nadir.

In January 1991, Islamic radical organizations began an orgy of mass killing of Hindus in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. Over 100,000 innocent people were killed and over 500,000 were driven out of their homes.

A year later, in 1992, there was an agitation over a disputed structure at Ayodhya, which Hindus claimed to be the birth place of Lord Rama. The Hindus believed that the Moghul emperor, Babur, had demolished this temple and built a mosque over it.

In December 1992, thousands of Hindus gathered at the disputed site and razed down the structure. This day was marked as '*Hindu Awakening Day*' by saffron outfits.

After the demolition of the disputed structure at Ayodhya, a Hindu right wing activist was murdered by an angry Muslim mob in Mumbai (then Bombay).

The Hindus of Mumbai staged a backlash which triggered large scale rioting in the city resulting in the deaths of over 700 people, mostly Muslims.

In retaliation to the Mumbai riots, Islamic radicals carried out a series of synchronized bomb blasts in the city killing 288 and injuring thousands.

The Islamic radicals claimed that the attacks were to avenge the deaths of thousands of Muslims killed in the Mumbai riots.

The 1993 Mumbai bombings marked the beginning of '*Jihad*' (Holy war) which the Islamic radicals declared against the Hindu '*Kaffirs*' (Infidels).

This holy war found huge backing in the form of the Inter State Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan.

The emergence of Islamic terrorism resulted in the phenomenal rise of right wing Hindu radicalism in the form of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) backed by its NGO wing the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its sister concerns Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).

However, unlike its Islamic counterpart, Hindu radicalism was confined only to sloganeering, protests and acts of vandalism but certainly not organized terror attacks aimed at killing innocent civilians.

However, in December 1999, Hindu radicalism saw its first incident of organized crime in the form of the murder of Australian Christian Missionary Graham Staines and his two sons, Philip (10) and Timothy (6).

Graham Staines was accused by Hindu organizations especially the Bajrang Dal of mass conversion of tribal Hindus to Christianity.

On 22nd January 1999, Staines was sleeping with his kids in his station wagon at Manoharpur village in the Indian state of Orissa when a mob attacked and set the vehicle on fire killing all three.

Dara Singh, an activist of the Bajrang Dal, was found guilty of leading the mob and was convicted for life imprisonment in 2005.

Although the Staines murder was carried out by Hindu radicals belonging to the Bajrang Dal, there was no evidence of any direct involvement of Bajrang Dal in this attack.

Three years later, on 27th February 2002, Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya after a religious ceremony, were lynched by a mob of around 2000 Muslims at the Godhra Railway Station in Gujrat.

The Muslim mob was led by a local cleric Maulvi Hussain Haji Ibrahim and the attack was supported by the local Muslim community. 58 Hindu pilgrims including 25 women and 25 children were killed in this attack.

Soon after the attack on the train, the Muslims of Godhra blocked roads to prevent police and fire tenders from reaching the railway station. In addition, they also provided shelter to the rioters after the train attack.

This news spread like fire throughout Gujrat. Hindu organizations called a state wide general strike and demanded action against the Muslims of Godhra especially, the cleric.

To make matters worse, the Congress jumped in support of the Muslims and defended their actions. The entire Hindu community was outraged by the Muslim appeasement politics of the Congress. This resulted in one of the bloodiest riots in India's history.

On 29th February 2002, hell broke loose in the streets of Gujrat. Hindu mobs in thousands, led by local Hindu leaders, stormed into the Muslim dominated areas and started butchering their Muslim counterparts.

The month long violence in Gujrat claimed the lives of over 2500 Muslims and around 350 Hindus. Till date thousands remain untraceable.

The Gujrat riots were the last nail in the coffin for Hindu-Muslim relations in India. It not only polarized the Indian populace along communal lines but also gave rise to a new war cry for Hindus against Muslims ....

"*Jai Hindu Rashtra*" (Hail Hindu Nation).

The Congress countered the "*Hindu Rashtra*" slogan by introducing a new term in Indian politics called "*Saffron Terrorism*".

This neologism was first used in an article written by Praveen Swami in the fortnightly magazine Frontline on 16th March 2002.

The Congress immediately grabbed this neologism and effectively used it to target Hindu organizations especially those backing the BJP.

A large number of influential figures condemned the use of this term by the Congress and described it an insult to the Hindu religion, and aimed solely at wooing the minority vote bank and promoting its own agenda.

Despite the nationwide outrage, the Congress continued using this term to cast connotations on the ideology of Hindu organizations. However, it did not prove effective as nobody took this term seriously.

Six months later, in December 2002, an improvised explosive device was found at the Bhopal Railway Station in the state of Madhya Pradesh which was successfully diffused by the bomb squad.

To everyone's surprise, the Madhya Pradesh Police questioned two activists of the Bajrang Dal, Ramji Kalsanghra and Sunil Joshi. However, they were let off as no hard evidence linking them to the bombs was found.

The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Digvijay Singh said in a press briefing that he had strong evidence of the involvement of Bajrang Dal members in various kinds of terror activities. Eventually, this crucial evidence was never passed on to the police by Singh.

By 2004, the '*Saffron Terror*' myth began to be used by a section of leftists to describe actions against Islamic radicals as "*Targeting innocent Muslims by Saffron leaning men in uniforms*".

It all began in February 2004 when the Jammu & Kashmir Police killed Ehsan Illahi, a terrorist belonging to the Pakistan based Lashkar e Taiba (LeT).

Through Ilahi's laptop, the police got information that his associate, a person called Javed Ghulam Sheikh was plotting to kill Mr. Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister of Gujarat to avenge the Gujrat riots.

The Indian Intelligence Bureau passed on this information to the Gujrat Police which laid a trap for Javed Shaikh in Ahmedabad.

On 15th June 2004 on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, Gujrat, Javed Shaikh and three of his associates were gunned down by the Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) of the Ahmedabad City Police. The names of three associates were Amjad Ali Rana, Zeeshan Johar and a nineteen year old girl Ishrat Jahan Raza.

On 15th July 2004, The Indian Express carried a news report that the Lahore-based '*Ghazwa Times*', a mouthpiece of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, acknowledged Ishrat Jahan as a Lashkar-e-Taiba operative

According to these news reports, the '*Ghazwa Times*' had published this article on the "*Jamat-ul-Dawa*" website stating that "*the veil of Ishrat Jahan, a woman activist of LeT, was removed by Indian police and her body was kept with other Mujahideens on the ground*", and also that "*Ishrat was with her husband, sitting on the front seat of the car*".

However, several human rights groups in India, mostly those funded by Ford Foundation and Greenpeace, alleged that the Ishrat Jahan killing was a fake encounter and claimed that the Gujrat Police was targeting innocent Muslims.

An inquiry was ordered and, surprisingly, the police officers involved in the encounter were convicted for the "*Cold blooded murder of innocent Muslims*".

The Deputy Commissioner of Police Dhananjay G. Vanzara, who led the operation, was sacked and imprisoned for over eight years.

Eventually, in 2013, it was proved that the encounter was genuine and Ishrat Jahan was indeed an operative of the Lashkar e Toiba.

The Intelligence Bureau chief, Asif Ibrahim went on to say that the Office of the Prime Minister and the Home Minister of India had enough evidence to prove that Ishrat was a part of the LeT module but, they chose to ignore it.

On 6th April 2006, the propagators of the "*Saffron Terror*" myth got a golden opportunity when there was an explosion in a house in Nanded owned by an executive engineer of the Maharashtra Irrigation Department in which two men were killed and three others injured.

The Joint Commissioner of the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of Maharashtra Police, investigating the case, Mr. K.P. Raghuvanshi informed the press that the five men were members of the Bajrang Dal and were manufacturing crude handmade bombs in the house.

Raghuvanshi revealed the names of the two dead men as Naresh Rajkondwar and Himanshu Pandey.

The names of the three injured were Yogesh Deshpande, Maruti Wagh and Gururaj Tupttewar.

The Nanded incident gave the opportunity for the leftists to justify its "*Saffron Terror*" myth and claim that finally they had evidence to prove that Hindu radicals were involved in terror activities.

However, experts dismissed this myth once again saying that the bombs found in Nanded were crude handmade bombs which could be used only during communal riots or sporadic incidents of violence but were not sophisticated devices that could be used in a terror attack.

By now, this term "*Saffron Terror*" had turned into such an obsession for the Congress that it was desperate to do anything to justify this myth even if it meant .....

"LET US EXPLODE BOMBS OURSELVES IN MALEGAON AND DECLARE IT AS AN ACT OF SAFFRON TERROR"

****

Chapter 1

It was a Friday, the 8th of September 2006, at 13.15hrs IST, in the small town of Malegaon, located in the Nasik district of the Indian state of Maharashtra, 290 km to the northeast of Mumbai.

Thousands of Muslim devotees had gathered at the '*Kabrastan*' (Muslim Cemetery), adjacent to a mosque, after their Friday prayers, to observe the '*Shab e Bara*' (Holy Day).

Suddenly, two powerful and deafening explosions rocked the small town. There was panic all around as the devotees began running all over the place to save their lives resulting in a massive stampede.

A team of the Maharashtra Police immediately rushed to the spot and tried to take control of the situation. But, the crowds were angry and were growing restless.

The police realized that the situation was slipping out of their hands. Finally, the paramilitary forces were called in and a curfew was imposed in the town to prevent unrest.

By evening, it became clear that it was a terror attack. The Maharashtra Police issued a press release stating that two bombs, attached to bicycles, had exploded outside the '*Kabrastan*' resulting in 37 fatalities and 125 injuries.

The Maharashtra Police suspected the involvement of Pakistan based terror outfits Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed or Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami in the attacks but, could not confirm it as no evidence was found against any of these groups.

The next day, some major newspapers stated that not two but three explosions had taken place in Malegaon. The reports also dismissed the claims of Maharashtra Police which said that Pakistani terror outfits were involved in these attacks.

The reports said that Islamic terror groups cannot be involved as the Pakistan backed Taliban regime in Afghanistan had enjoyed immense support from Muslims in Malegaon.

Some left leaning newspapers carried reports that pointed fingers at the '*Bajrang Dal*' of involvement in these attacks as Malegaon had been the focus of Hindu-Muslim tensions for a very long time.

The Muslims of Malegaon were accused by the Bajrang Dal of celebrating Pakistani victories over India in cricket matches as well as supporting terror attacks in India by Pakistani terror outfits.

The newspaper reports also said that the methods used in the Malegaon blasts were similar to attacks on mosques earlier in 2006 for which 16 Bajrang Dal activists including Ramnarayan alias Ramji Kalsangram and Sunil Joshi, allegedly part of the Bajrang Dal, were arrested but not charged due to lack of evidence.

However, Ajai Sahni, an intelligence analyst tracking terrorist groups in South Asia, rebutted this theory and said that it was unlikely that a Hindu group was involved because they '*lacked the expertise for such an attack*'.

Sahni ruled out the involvement of the Bajrang Dal in the blasts citing two reasons; 1. RDX is only available to Islamist outfits. 2. Bajrang Dal has so far used crude handmade bombs, nothing as sophisticated as the ones in Malegaon.

On 10th September 2006, NDTV, a TV channel, reported that it had found out from the investigators that they had identified the owner of one of the bicycles on which a bomb was planted.

On the same day, the Maharashtra Police released sketches of two suspects in connection with the Malegaon bomb attacks.

On 11th September 2006, the Director General of Police (Maharashtra) P.S. Pasricha informed the press that officers investigating the Malegaon blasts probe had gained vital leads and expressed confidence that a breakthrough would be achieved soon.

The same day, B. Raman, a reporter, wrote an article in Rediff.com in which he raised questions on the investigation stating "*..... police officers do not have the confidence that the political leadership would stand by them if leaders of the Muslim community accuse the investigating officers of being anti-secular, communal or prejudiced against Muslims*"

Raman's words almost came true the next day when the Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh referred as "*inappropriate to rule out or rule in the involvement of Hindu groups*" (in the attack).

Briefing the Indian Parliament, the Prime Minister said "*It will be inappropriate for us to rule out anything or rule in anything. I think there should be a fair investigation which inspires confidence and brings out the truth and nothing but the truth without any pre-conceived notion. That has to be the objective*"

Thus, it was clear that the Indian political leadership was reluctant to take action against people from the Muslim community with the fear of losing a lucrative vote-bank.

By the end of September 2006, the Maharashtra Police confirmed that the explosives used in the blasts were '*a cocktail of RDX, ammonium nitrate and fuel oil*'.

The police further confirmed that '*it was the same mixture used in 7/11*' referring to the 11th July 2006 Mumbai train bombings carried out by Pakistan based terror outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) in which 209 people were killed and over 700 injured.

On being asked about the suspects, the Nasik Superintendent of Police Rajvardhan declined to give details, saying '*We can't say anything till we get reports from all the agencies*'.

On 13th October 2006, the Maharashtra Police claimed to have identified the perpetrators. In a press release, they said that the conspirators belonged to the Lashkar-e-Toiba which had strong contacts with the banned terror outfit Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). The police also did not rule out the involvement of HuJI in these attacks.

On 30th October 2006, the Maharashtra Police arrested Noor-Ul-Hooda, an activist of the SIMI in connection with the Malegaon blasts.

DGP, Mr. Pasricha claimed that the police were very close to cracking the case and two more suspects, Shabeer Batterywala and Raees Ahmad were arrested.

The Maharashtra police said in a press release that the prime conspirator of this attack, Shabbir Batterywala, was an operative of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) while the co-conspirator, Raees Ahmad belonged to SIMI.

On 28th November 2006, DGP P.S. Pasricha claimed that, during the course of the interrogation they found that two Pakistani nationals were also involved in the explosions. One of them was a person called Muzzammill Bhatt.

Briefing the press, he said "*We have successfully detected the Malegaon blasts case. We are, however, on the lookout for eight more suspects in the case. Three of the accused have confessed about their involvement in this conspiracy*"

In the following days, the police arrested eight more suspects, including two booked in the 7/11 Mumbai serial blasts. The Maharashtra Police thus, prima facie, ruled out the involvement of any Hindu radical group in the Malegaon attack. The Indian political leadership had no option but to accept the reality that it was indeed an Islamic group that had carried out the Malegaon attacks of 2006.

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coaches. The probe also confirmed that a mixture of Potassium Chlorate and Sulfur had been used as explosives in the blast.

The probe also showed that the train had slowed down to a speed of 20kms per hour just before it was scheduled to pass Diwana. The results strengthened the belief that the suspects got off the train before the explosions.

In early March, Haryana police arrested three people from the city of Indore who allegedly sold the suitcases used in the bombings but no charges were pressed on them.

Their names were Safdar Nagori, Kamruddin Nagori and Aamil Parvez. However, no major developments took place in the investigation after that.

On 18th May 2007, a blast occurred near the open air section of the Makkah Masjid located in the old city area of Hyderabad killing 16 and injuring 50 people. At the time of the blast more than 10,000 people had gathered inside the mosque premises, for their Friday prayers.

The blast was caused by a cellphone-triggered pipe bomb placed near the Wuzukhana, a spot where ablutions are performed.

According to the police, two bombs were planted at the site. While the first had exploded, miraculously, the second did not. The police defused the second bomb and recovered the cell phone that was used to trigger the bomb.

A few days later, the police arrested Abdul Kaleem, an 18 year old Muslim boy from Hyderabad. Kaleem, who was in the business of selling cell phones, was the younger brother of Abdul Khwaja who was suspected to have strong links with the Lashkae-e-Taiba and Pakistan's ISI. The police discovered that the SIM's in the defused IED's were purchased from Kaleem's shop.

On 11th October 2007, at 6.12pm, another explosion occurred near a courtyard outside of the Dargah of Sufi Saint Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer in Rajasthan.

The blast took place during the Iftar period when the evening prayers had just concluded before the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and a crowd had gathered outside the shrine to end their fast.

The bomb was concealed in a Tiffin box, which workers use to store their lunch. Remnants of a mobile phone were also retrieved from the site.

A day later, Lalit Maheswari of the Ajmer police stated, "*We have recovered some mobile instruments, so we think some sophisticated device was used ...*"

The Rajasthan Police suspected the hand of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba as they believed that the attack was a part of the conflict between Sunni Islamic extremists against the Sufi-derived Islamic traditions popular in India. However, no further leads were established.

As months passed by, the police came under intense questioning from the press and media for their slow pace of investigations. The Indian government too was under fire.

In mid-March 2008, the Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) of Haryana Police conducted a narco test on Safdar Nagori, Kamruddin Nagori and Aamil Parvez, all arrested suspects in the Samjhauta bombings.

During the tests, Kamruddin Nagori and his associates confessed to SIMI's role and involvement of Muslims in the Samjhauta bombing as well as the serial terror attacks in Mumbai, Aurangabad, Hyderabad, Ajmer and the shootout at the American consulate in Kolkata.

Nagori told the team of doctors, "*In the Samjhauta Express blasts, some persons from Pakistan had come and they had purchased the suitcase cover at Kataria Market, Indore. One person from SIMI named Tanzeem had helped them to get the suitcase cover stitched. SIMI leader Abdul Razak had helped the Pakistanis in the Samjhauta Express blasts*".

Nagori also revealed that Razak had informed him beforehand about the Samjhauta Express blasts. Razak had sought the help of West Bengal SIMI president Misbah-ul-Islam for the Samjhauta explosions. Razak has a number of relatives in Pakistan, according to Nagori's revelations.

Nagori also concurred about Razak's involvement in the Samjhauta Express blasts. He said during drug interrogation, '*There were good relations between Safdar Nagori and Abdul Razak. Abdul Razak had discussed the Samjhauta Express blasts with Safdar Nagori*'.

During the drug interrogation, Nagori revealed that SIMI has a strong presence in Maharashtra, including Malegaon, and he was "*aware of the complicity of Muslims in the 2006 Malegaon blasts*".

The 32-page narco analysis test report of Safdar Nagori, Kamruddin and Aamil Parzez quotes "*In the Malegaon blasts, some of the Muslim members were involved and that Nagori was aware of it. SIMI members were involved in the Samjhauta Express train blasts*".

The report further states, "*He (Nagori) said Asif Khan from Maharashtra is his (Nagori's) friend and that he is involved in the Mumbai train blasts and the blast at Aurangabad. After the blasts, Abdul Subhan alias Tauqeer and Asif Khan had gone to Hafeez's house for hiding but did not find him at his place. Asif Khan met Tanvir and Yasir of Sholapur and they both arranged a hideout at Belgaum in Karnataka. Some days later, Asif Khan was arrested from Belgaum*".

On 13th May 2008, a series of nine synchronized bomb blasts that took place within a span of fifteen minutes at different locations in Jaipur, the capital city of the Indian state of Rajasthan which left 63 dead and 216 people injured. The bombs went off near historic monuments and popular tourist destinations at one of the busiest times of the day.

The Rajasthan Police suspected the involvement of HuJI behind these attacks as it had come on the backdrop of deportation of more than 50,000 illegal Bangladeshi immigrants from Rajasthan.

Two days after the blasts, a previously unknown Islamic militant group called Indian Mujahedeen (IM), sent an e-mail to the Indian media in which they claimed responsibility for the attacks and said they will '*demolish the faith of infidels of India*'.

However, the Indian Home Ministry immediately issued a press release stating that an anonymous e-mail could not be relied upon and might be sent to mislead investigating agencies.

What prompted the Indian Home Ministry to come to this conclusion and give a clean chit to Pakistan based terror outfits before the investigations had even begun was a big question on everyone's lips.

At that time, India was into election mode as the general elections for its Parliament were scheduled for mid-2009.

Thus, every political party, including the ruling Indian National Congress, were in a rat race to woo the lucrative '*Muslim Vote Bank*' and were reluctant to accuse the involvement of Muslims in any terror attacks.

In the days that followed, the Rajasthan Police claimed to have found credible evidence linking the attacks to HuJI but no major arrests were made.

Was there a political pressure on the Rajasthan Police not to arrest Muslims?

Between July and September 2008, there were similar attacks on Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Delhi in which 86 people were killed and over 300 injured. But, yet again, ho arrests were made.

With each passing day, question began to be raised against the inability of the Indian Government in nabbing the perpetrators of these attacks.

The Indian Government was caught walking on thin ice. On one hand they were reluctant to arrest Muslim suspects while on the other hand their competence was being questioned.

By the first week of September, some leaders of the Congress and the NCP, led by Congress leader A.R. Antulay began comparing the attacks on Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Delhi to the Nanded blasts of 2006 and blamed Hindu radical groups as the perpetrators of the attacks.

Although some left leaning media houses jumped in support of this mythical theory, it was widely condemned by a large section of the Indian populace.

By the start of the second week of September, this mythical theory of the Leftists received a severe blow when the Delhi Police found strong evidence linking the Delhi attacks to the Indian Mujahedeen group led by Abdul Subhan Qureshi alias Tauqir, an IT professional, from Mumbai.

Around the same time, the Gujarat police arrested Mufti Abu Bashir, an Indian Mujahedeen operative along with nine other accomplices, in connection to the Ahmedabad bombings. During the interrogation, Abu Bashir confessed that the Indian Mujahedeen was behind the recent attacks.

Furthermore, the Gujrat Police also found out that members of that organization were hiding in the L-18 block of Batla House located in Jamia Nagar, New Delhi.

On 19th September 2008, the Delhi Police, based on the information provided by Gujrat Police, raided the Batla House in which they shot down two Indian Mujahedeen operatives Atif Amin and Mohamed Sajid while two others, Mohd Saif and Zeeshan were arrested.

But, the person who led the police encounter Delhi Police Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma was killed in this incident.

The main spearhead of the Indian Mujahedeen, Yasin Bhatkal however managed to escape from the spot a few minutes before the Delhi Police arrived on the scene.

The confessions of Saif and Zeeshan led to arrest of a number of local people from Uttar Pradesh. They were Sadiq Sheikh, Afzal Usmani, Arif Sheikh, Mohammed Zakir Sheikh and Mohammed Ansar Sheikh. All were sent by the judicial Chief Metropolitan Magistrate to 12 days' policy custody.

As the news of the Batla House encounter flashed across the nation, Indian political parties like the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and the RJD jumped into the ring in a desperate bid to woo Muslims and began accusing the Delhi Police of targeting innocent Muslims.

Some NGO's demanded a judicial inquiry into this matter. Media houses like "*The Hindu*" published an article stating that Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma did not die in the encounter but, was killed by a fellow colleague over a personal rivalry.

The ruling Congress could feel the heat as the lucrative "*Muslim Vote Bank*" was slowly slipping out of its grasp. Their leaders thus decided to act fast.

The first to act was senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh was the first to coin the term '*a fake encounter*'.

Union Minister, Salman Khurshid went to the extent of saying "*Sonia Gandhi had tears in her eyes when she heard that two innocent Muslim youths were killed at the Batla House by the Delhi Police in a fake encounter aimed at discriminating innocent Muslims*".

Eventually, after an investigation that lasted for over five years, it was proven that the Batla house encounter was indeed genuine.

This mad race to grab the "*Muslim Vote Bank*" at any costs was driving Indian political outfits crazy. They were now prepared to go to any lengths to win Muslim votes.

This rat-race would go on to be the cause of an entirely new terminology in Indian politics and this new terminology would be eventually called as .....

"*Bhagwa Aatankwaad*" (Saffron Terrorism).

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Chapter 3

It was 29th September 2008, the last day of the holy month of Ramzan, a day when Muslims break their month long fast. The town of Malegaon was decorated with colorful banners. People were busy with festivities as mosques began conducting '*Namaaz*' (prayers).

At the depot of the Shakil Goods Company, not far away from the crowded market area, workers were busy loading and unloading goods from trucks when suddenly a powerful bomb detonated just outside the depot of the transport company. One truck was engulfed in flames and thick black smoke filled the area.

People from surrounding areas rushed to the spot and tried in vain to douse the raging flames. Within minutes, two fire tenders arrived at the spot.

After a two hour tussle, the fire was finally brought under control. While the fire tenders were fighting the flames, the police too arrived and began their investigations.

Initially, nobody suspected it as a terror attack as the blast took place in an isolated area not inhabited by many. The police thought that some inflammable goods in the truck had caught fire while being unloaded.

A truck and two scooters were badly damaged in this blast. Seven workers also died in the blast. The police registered a case of accident and closed the file.

However, the same day, there was another explosion in the tribal town of Modasa in the Sabarkantha district of Gujrat in which one person was killed.

The situation in Modasa would have been worse had the Gujrat Police not detected seventeen other bombs and diffused them.

The Maharashtra State Government immediately declared that the Malegaon blast was a terror attack and directed the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) to take over the investigations. The file was thus re-opened and investigations began afresh.

Next day, the Maharashtra ATS chief, Hemant Karkare informed the press that the Malegaon blast was not an accident, but a terror attack and that the bombs used in the Malegaon and Modasa attacks were similar to those that exploded in Delhi a week before this attack.

Karkare further informed the press that the bomb used in the Malegaon attack was fitted on an LML Freedom motorbike.

This motorbike was depicting the number plate with registration number MH-15-P-4275. However, the engine and Chassis numbers were tampered with and were beyond recognition

With the help of advanced technology and scientific aid, the police was able to collect the original registration number. It was a Gujrat registration no. GJ 05 BR 1920.

This claim of the ATS raised several doubts for two reasons 1. The vehicle was completely destroyed in the blast, and 2. Scientific forensic analysis takes at least four days.

Thus, how could the ATS recover the original details of the vehicle in just 24 hours? Did the ATS know the registration details of the vehicle beforehand?

Two days later, Karkare informed the press that the bike used in the terror attack belonged to a woman called Puranchetanand Giri alias Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, an activist of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), a youth wing of the political party BJP.

A resident of Indore, Madhya Pradesh, Pragya Singh Thakur was a firebrand student leader. In 2006, she joined the ABVP and became its prominent face. There, she came into contact with very influential politicians like Uma Bharati, L.K. Advani and Shivraj Chauhan of the BJP.

In late 2006, Pragya Singh Thakur happened to visit the Mahakaal Ashram in Indore as a part of her student activism. There, she was fascinated by the services rendered by the volunteers of the ashram towards the poor and needy.

The activities of the Mahakaal Ashram had a profound effect on Pragya Singh such that she took celibacy and shifted to Joshi's main ashram in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. A year later, in 2007, Pragya Singh sold her bike to Sunil Joshi for use by the volunteers of his ashram.

The day blasts took place at Malegaon, Pragya Singh was Indore where she was staying at the residence of one of the ashram disciples. On 4th October 2008, she returned back to the ashram in Jabalpur.

On 7th October 2008, Inspector Sawant of the Maharashtra ATS called up Pragya Singh on her phone. After a brief introduction, Inspector Sawant came straight to the point.

He asked "*May I know where were you on 29th September?*"

Pragya Singh replied "*Sir, I was at the ashram in Indore. I returned to Jabalpur three days back*"

Inspector Sawant further asked "*Does the LML Freedom bike with no. GJ 05 BR 1920 belong to you?*"

Pragya Singh said "*Yes ..... It was my bike. But, a year ago, I sold it to Sunil Joshi, my spiritual guru*"

Sawant asked "*Can you tell me where is the bike now?*"

Pragya Singh said "*I have no idea Sir*"

Sawant said "*Can you come to Surat and meet me as soon as possible?*"

Pragya Singh asked curiously "*But ..... Why?*"

Sawant said "*Your bike has been used in the terror attack that took place in Malegaon last week*"

Pragya Singh was shocked. She screamed "*What?*"

Sawant said "*Yes. That's why we need some details from you about the bike. Hence, I request you to please come to Surat immediately. You can give me a call on this number as soon as you reach Surat*"

Pragya Singh said "*Yes Sir ..... I'll be there as soon as I can*"

Pragya Singh dutifully obeyed Inspector Sawant's orders and boarded the Narmada Express the same night from Jabalpur.

On 8th October 2008, at 11.00am, Pragya Singh arrived at the Ujjain Railway Station, Madhya Pradesh.

From the railway station, she boarded an auto rickshaw and went straight to the Mahakaal Dharamshaala.

There, Pragya Singh had her lunch and rested in her room at the Dharamshaala. After a while, she picked up her phone and decided to call one of her close aide.

The ATS later claimed that the other person on the phone was Ramji alias Ram Narayan Kalsanghra, the alleged mastermind of the Malegaon blasts.

The telephonic communication between Pragya Singh and Ramji Kalsanghra was as follows;

Pragya: *The Maharashtra Police have called me to Surat for questioning.*

Ramji: *Regarding what?*

Pragya: *They say that the scooter used in the Malegaon bombing was mine. They say it was found it at the site ..... They have called me to Surat.*

Ramji: *But, you had sold it long ago.*

Pragya: *But, what will I tell them? I don't even know where .... Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh or Maharashtra.*

Ramji: *Tell them Gujrat.*

Pragya: *But, what if they ask me when?*

Ramji: *Tell them that you don't remember.*

Pragya: *But will they believe it?*

Ramji: *If they don't believe it, tell my name.*

Pragya: *But ..... How did just seven people die? Wasn't there a rush there?*

Ramji: *Maybe no ..... Anyway ..... You don't worry. I have spoken to Arvindji. He will come with over one lakh people if they do anything to you.*

At 3.30pm, Pragya Singh left for the Ujjain Railway Station and boarded the Indore-Pune Express for Surat.

In the wee hours of 10th October 2008, Pragya Singh arrived at the Surat Railway Station where she was received by her close aide Bhim Bai Pashricha.

Pashricha took Pragya Singh to her residence at Ashtop Nagar in Surat. There, Pragya Singh had a wash and took some rest.

At 10.00am, both Pragya Singh and Bhim Bai Pashricha called up Inspector Sawant and informed him about her arrival in Surat. Within an hour, Inspector Sawant arrived at Pashricha's residence.

Pragya asked Sawant "*You had called me regarding my bike? What is it that you wish to ask me about my bike?*"

Inspector Sawant told Pragya "*Your bike was used in the terror attacks that took place in Malegaon on the 29th*"

Pragya asked "*Are you sure it's my bike? ..... I mean ..... LML Freedom ..... Silver color .....*"

Sawant replied "*Yes ..... We have confirmed it. It is the same bike*"

Pragya said "*But ..... In 2007, I had sold it to Sunil Joshi, my spiritual guru, for an amount of Rs.24000. In fact, I had even signed the papers at the Indore RTO office. You can check out at the Indore RTO office*"

But, Inspector Sawant was unrelenting. He kept on repeatedly asking Pragya only one question "*Then, how is it that the bike was used in the Malegaon blasts?*"

Pragya kept giving the same reply "*I have no idea of the bike since the day I sold it*"

Finally, Inspector Sawant told Pragya "*You will have to come with us to Mumbai for further questioning*"

Pragya asked "*Mumbai?.....*"

Sawant told her "*Yes ..... But, don't worry. Soon after the questioning, you will be allowed to return back to the ashram*"

Pragya dutifully obliged thinking that it was a routine questioning and it was her duty to cooperate with the police.

Sawant said "*You can take your father along with you if you wish*"

Pragya said "*No ..... My father is old and unwell. Instead, can I take Bhim Bai along with me?*"

Sawant agreed "*Of course, you can*"

Pragya Singh and Bhim Bai Pashricha went along with Sawant in the police jeep with the ATS team to Mumbai.

Pragya thought that it was a routine questioning just for a day and did not carry any belongings with her.

What she did not realize was that, this was the last time she was travelling as a free woman.

In doing so, she had unknowingly walked into a malicious trap laid for her by the Maharashtra ATS.

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Chapter 4

By midnight, Pragya Singh and Bhim Bai Pashricha along with the ATS team arrived at Mumbai. They were then taken to the Kalachowki Police Station for questioning.

Within a few minutes, the ATS cheif, Hemant Karkare arrived at the Kalachowki Police Station. He was accompanied by ATS officer Arun Khanvilkar.

Karkare kept on repeatedly asking Sadhvi the same question "*What was your role in the Malegaon blasts?*"

Pragya kept one giving the same reply "*I have nothing to do with the attack*"

Finally, Karkare threatened Pragya "*Confess to your crime or else, we will have to resort to third decree methods against you*"

Pragya pleaded "*I haven't done anything Sir. Why should I confess?*"

By now, Pragya Singh was beginning to realize that the motive of the ATS behind bringing her to Mumbai was not to question her, but to falsely implicate her and obtain her confession as an accomplice in the Malegaon terror attack.

The questioning continued for two days. During this time, Sadhvi Pragya and Bhim Bai Pashricha were illegally detained by the ATS in police lockups without a case being registered against them.

The ATS tried every trick in the book to break their resolve but, could not extract the confession statement from Pragya Singh and Pashricha.

Finally, on 12th October 2008, the ATS adopted an altogether new strategy. The ATS chief, Hemant Karkare gave orders to subject both Pragya and Pashricha to third decree tortures.

Thereafter, both Pragya and Pashricha were handed over some of the most barbaric tortures and inhuman treatment by the ATS.

Arun Khanvilkar beat both, Pragya and Pashricha with leather belts throughout the night. The only break they would get from the beatings was when their arms would swell up with the battering.

Then, a constable would bring a container of warm water to soak their arms so they shrunk back to their normal size. Once that was done, the tortures continued.

Finally, Pashricha succumbed to the tortures and agreed to sign on the confession statement naming Pragya as the mastermind behind the Malegaon terror attacks. However, Pragya continued to plead innocence. Thus, the ATS decided to adopt extreme measures against her.

By 13th October 2008, the tortures on Pragya gained momentum. She was starved for 24 hours without even a morsel of food.

She was woken up from sleep at 4.00am, brutally beaten up and given electric shocks due to which, the lower half of her body would eventually be paralyzed for life.

The Maharashtra ATS, led by Hemant Karkare and Arun Khanvilkar, abused Pragya using some of the filthiest language. The ATS officers would call Pragya a prostitute and a mistress of her spiritual guru, Sunil Joshi.

Karkare and Khanvilkar made Pragya listen to highly objectionable pornographic recordings in the company of male under-trials. They even threatened to parade her naked in front of male under trials.

One day, a male under-trial objected to cooperate with the ATS. He was brutally beaten up by Karkare till he dropped to the ground unconscious. Karkare then turned around to the other male under-trials and threatened them of dire consequences if they objected to his command.

On 14th October 2008, Pragya was whisked away by the ATS to an undisclosed location where Karkare threatened to rape her if she did not confess. By now, Pragya was on the verge of breaking point. She pleaded for mercy and agreed to confess to the crime.

Citing this opportunity, the ATS took both Pragya and Pashricha to Hotel Rajdoot in Nagpada area of Mumbai on 15th October 2008 where they were kept separately in room no. 314 and 315.

Pragya and Bhim Bai Pashricha were forced by the ATS to enter their names in the hotel register and sign on it.

The hotel charges were paid by Karkare. Thereafter, Khanvilkar pulled out a cell phone bearing a number 9406600004 and called up a volunteer of the ashram in Jabalpur.

Khanvilkar gave Pragya the phone and asked her to inform her aide *"I am in Mumbai on a visit. I am in good health at a hotel here"*

Pragya did whatever she was told in order to avoid further tortures.

On the evening of 15th October 2008, the ATS officially informed the press that the student wing of the BJP, ABVP was behind the Malegaon attacks.

This newsbreak sent shockwaves throughout the country. Reacting to this, Sunil Bansal, secretary of the ABVP, said *"First ATS mentioned the possibility of ABVP being involved in the blasts and then the matter was also raised in Parliament by a Congress MP. But ABVP is in no way involved in the blasts. ABVP has even demanded that there should be a proper inquiry and ATS should come out with concrete evidence and not talk without any basis. They don't have any proof against any ABVP activist"*

That same day, Pragya began suffering from urinary infection. She repeatedly collapsed during the questioning by the ATS. Her health began deteriorating by each passing hour.

Finally, on 18th Octobet 2008, the Maharashtra ATS shifted Pragya to the Sushrusha Hospital in Mumbai for treatment where she was kept in the high security cell.

After admitting Pragya to the hospital, the ATS brought Pashricha there and forced her to fill up the forms at the hospital entry.

The hospital fees were paid by ATS officer Khanvilkar. Thereafter, Pashricha was whisked away in a police jeep.

But, as there was no improvement in Pragya's condition, the Maharashtra ATS shifted her to another hospital in Mumbai (she could not recall the name).

Close associates of Pragya were desperate to help her. But, as she was not formally arrested, the ATS informed them that they had no knowledge about her whereabouts.

On 22nd October 2008, Pragya was discharged from the hospital. Before moving her out of the hospital, the ATS took every step to ensure that she was not recognized by anyone.

Pragya was tranquilized, her body was covered with a white cloth and she was whisked away in a hearse van to the Kalachowki Police Station.

Within minutes of reaching the Kalachowki Police Station, the tortures on Pragya resumed. She could not bear it anymore.

Pragya asked Khanvilkar "*Why are you doing this to me? I trusted you. I came all the way from Jabalpur to Surat and then to Mumbai with you as I considered it my duty to cooperate with the police. Yet, you illegally detained me, tortured me ..... Why?*"

Karkare, Khanvilkar and the other ATS officers looked at each other and broke into a roaring laughter.

Thus, it was evident that the arrest of Pragya Singh was a well-planned conspiracy hatched by an invisible '*Hand*' only to woo people of the Muslim community in the run up to the 2009 general elections.

By now, the Indian media had picked up the story of Pragya's illegal detention. The pressure on the ATS was mounting as a number of questions were being raised on her whereabouts. It was time for the ATS to act fast.

Thus, on 23rd October 2008, the ATS formally arrested Pragya. She was then shifted to Nasik and before the Chief Judicial Magistrate of the Nasik Sessions Court.

Acting against the norms, the ATS did not allow Pragya to meet any of her relatives. She was not even allowed to meet her lawyer Ganesh Sohni until 5 minutes before the hearing began.

In the court, the ATS presented the confession statement of Pashricha in addition to details of the LML Freedom motorbike used in the blasts.

The ATS also presented some videos from Pragya's public meetings where she was shown delivering inflammatory speeches against the Muslim community.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate of the Nasik Sessions Court asked Pragya "*Do you plead guilty to the charges*"

Pragya pleaded "*Sir, I have not done anything. I was called by the police for questioning in regard to the involvement of my bike in the terror attack. I considered it my duty to assist the police in their investigations and decided to cooperate with them. However, I was illegally detained from 10th October to 22nd October and brutal inhuman tortures were inflicted upon me in the lockup. The ATS were only interested in obtaining my confession statement*"

But, the ATS not only denied that Pragya was under detention but, even presented evidence to the court which showed that she and Pashricha were staying at Hotel Rajdoot, Nagpada during this time.

The ATS also presented details of Pragya's medical reports from Sushruchi Hospital to prove that she was not under illegal detention but, undergoing treatment in the hospital.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate thus rejected Pragya's pleas and remanded her to police custody till 3rd November 2008.

The Maharashtra ATS had thus succeeded in falsely implicating an innocent woman in a terror attack and establishing their '*Saffron Terror*' myth to prove that even Hindus can be terrorists.

However, a question does come to mind.....

Was there a third force behind these actions?

Looking at the actions of the ATS, it was certainly doubtful that they were acting on their own.

There was indeed an INVISIBLE '*HAND*' BEHIND '*SAFFRON TERRORISM*'.

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Chapter 5

After obtaining the confessions of Pragya and Pashricha, the Maharashtra ATS triumphantly disclosed that it had finally cracked the Malegaon blast case.

On 20th October 2008, while briefing the press, the chief of the Maharashtra ATS, Hemant Karkare said "*We have gained vital leads into the Malegaon attacks of 2008 and have tracked down the mastermind of the Malegaon blast*"

"He is a person called Chaturvedi and is a member of the RSS and Abhinav Bharat. Before the terror attacks, he was in touch with a lieutenant colonel and a retired major of the Indian Army"

"He met them at the Bhosle Military Academy in Bhopal where he sought their help on the use of explosives and its procurement. Thereafter they planned the attacks"

Hemant Karkare further said that Chaturvedi as well as the two retired army men would be arrested soon and charged with criminal conspiracy.

A deep study into this mystery reveals that Sudhakar Chaturvedi the person named by the ATS, was a very influential figure in Madhya Pradesh politics.

A native of Mirzapur, UP, Chaturvedi had joined the RSS following the Ayodhya agitation in 1990 and was the chief architect in the revival of the Abhinav Bharat in Madhya Pradesh in 2006.

It is ironic that, on one hand, the Maharashtra ATS had no prima facie, neither against Chaturvedi nor against any Hindu organization in the Malegaon terror attack case and was banking desperately on Pragya's confession statement.

While on the other hand, they were claiming that it had tracked down the mastermind of the Malegaon terror attack. One could smell a rotten egg here.

What was to follow three days later was a hair-raising story of sheer lawlessness of the Maharashtra ATS.

On 23rd October 2008, an ATS officer, Inspector Shekhar Bagde, called up Chaturvedi from a cell phone bearing no. 9923354185 and requested him to come to Deoli Camp, near the petrol pump.

Chaturvedi, unaware of the danger lurking ahead, obliged and set off to meet Inspector Bagde. Upon reaching there, he saw a police jeep standing near the petrol pump.

Chaturvedi parked his scooter and began walking towards the jeep. Suddenly, four policemen came from behind and pounced on him.

One of them screamed "*Mhadarchot*" and slapped Chaturvedi on his face.

Chaturvedi was then dumped into the boot of the police jeep and taken away. He was lying on the floor of the jeep with four policemen stamping him. His hands and legs were tied and a cloth was stuffed in his mouth.

On the way, a policeman kicked Chaturvedi on his chest and screamed "*Mhadarchot, bloody terrorist? Now I will plant a bomb in your ass. You are going to scream for mercy …. Bastard*"

All the way, Chaturvedi was kicked and abused by the policemen until he fell unconscious.

When he regained consciousness, Chaturvedi tried to open his eyes but couldn't as he was blindfolded. His hands and legs were still tied.

As soon as the scarf was removed, a flash of light hit Chaturvedi's eyes. He saw two police constables standing beside him.

Chaturvedi turned his face around to find out where he was brought. It was a small room with no windows. The place was stinking with foul odor.

Chaturvedi saw some blood stains on the walls and some sticks and whips were hanging on the walls.

He immediately realized that it was a room where the police torture under trials.

Chaturvedi told the policeman "*I am thirsty. Please give me some water to drink*".

The policeman said in a very arrogant tone "*You bastard .....Am I your servant to serve you water. Drink it yourself*".

The policeman walked towards the pitcher, dipped a mug into it and began pouring the water in front of Chaturvedi.

As Chaturvedi's hands and legs were tied, he found it difficult to move. He somehow scrambled towards the water and drank a couple of sips.

The policeman then told Chaturvedi "*You are at the police station. Do as our Saheb* (Boss) *says. Confess to your crime or else you will be tortured*".

Chaturvedi was lying on the floor of the police station. His entire body was aching due to the beatings he took on the way. He also had a severe headache. Just then, he saw five muscular men entering his cell.

One of them caught hold of his legs while the others began kicking him all over his body. Chaturvedi began yelling for mercy but the beatings did not stop.

A few minutes later, a police officer entered the cell and said to the policemen "*Screw this bastard in such a way that he should confess to his crime in the court*".

Chaturvedi later recognized that police officer as ATS officer Paramveer Singh from the Kalachowki Police Station, Mumbai. He was a part of the same gang which was desperate to implicate Sadhvi Pragya.

Chaturvedi was then picked up by a policeman and placed on a wooden stool. He was surrounded by around six policemen.

Paramveer Singh then stepped forward, placed his foot on Chaturvedi's thighs, pressed it hard and asked him "*You are now in the custody of Maharashtra ATS. Tell me …. Who are you working for? Who helped you manufacture bombs?*"

Chaturvedi was taken aback on hearing the word bomb. He pleaded with Paramveer Singh saying "*Bombs? ……. Sir, what bombs are you talking about. I don't understand anything. I have not made any bombs. Please believe me*".

But, Paramveer Singh did not buy his answer. He kicked Chaturvedi hard on his chest that he fell backwards and slammed the back of his head on the wall.

Chaturvedi's eyesight began fading. He could only hear the voice of Paramveer Singh screaming "*Bloody bastard ……. Rip his flesh till he confesses*".

Paramveer Singh continued to beat Chaturvedi. Filthy abuses were hurled at him and his family members. Even his mentally retarded son was not spared from abuses.

The brutal torture continued till Chaturvedi fell unconscious. His clothes were torn. There were wounds all over his body. His wallet, keys, ID card, etc. lay scattered all over the place. The police took everything in their possession and left the room.

When he regained consciousness, Chaturvedi saw a police constable standing near him. He asked the policeman "*Why are they doing all this to me?*"

The constable, who this time, happened to be a polite man, replied "*These are officers of the Maharashtra ATS. You are a prime suspect in the Malegaon blast case that took place in September*".

Chaturvedi was shocked by what he heard. "*What …… Terror attack?*" he screamed.

He later came to know from the constable that the names of the other officers were Sachin Kadam, Arun Khanvilkar, Krishna Sawant and Sunil Yadav.

With each passing day, the picture was getting clear that this was a sinister conspiracy to indict Hindu organizations into terror attacks. However, the objective of this conspiracy and the driving force behind it still remained a mystery.

Within a few minutes of Chaturvedi regaining consciousness, the ATS officers entered the dark cell and threatened Chaturvedi that if he does not confess, the tortures on him would continue.

Chaturvedi told them *"Sir, I have understood that you have brought me here as a suspect in the Malegaon blast. But, on the day of the blast, I was in the Bhavrupur village of Mirzapur, UP. There, we had organized a protest march to the Jigna Police Station along with the villagers. We were arrested and later released on bail".*

Chaturvedi further said *"Sir, you can check the records at the Jigna Police Station as well as my cell phone details. I was in Mirzapur for over three days".*

The ATS officer Khanvilkar stepped forward and told Chaturvedi *"Then, how is it that RDX has been found in your room in Deoli?"*

Chaturvedi was shocked on hearing this. He said in horror *"What .... RDX? Sir, you must have been mistaken. I have not seen RDX in my entire life".*

Khanvilkar screamed at Chaturvedi saying *"Don't lie to me .....you bastard. We have information that Lt. Col. Prasad Purohit provided you the RDX and trained you in the manufacture and use of bombs".*

Chaturvedi replied *"Sir, Col. Purohit is my very good friend. I met him around a year ago when I was in Deoli. He too was in Deoli, at the Bhosle Military Academy. Thereafter, we became good friends".*

Chaturvedi further said *"Col. Purohit is a big officer in the army. There are hundreds of commando's working under him who are professionals in the use of bombs. If Col. Purohit really intended to carry out terror*

attacks, he could have easily done it by winning the confidence of his own men rather than wasting his time training an idiot like me".

But, Khanvilkar was not prepared to listen. He was adamant on obtaining Chaturvedi's confession. He gave a final warning to Chaturvedi to confess or to face tortures.

Chaturvedi, who was on the verge of breaking point, succumbed and agreed to sign wherever Khanvilkar wanted him to sign.

Khanvilkar seized the opportunity and obtained Chaturvedi's signatures on some blank papers and left.

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Chapter 6

On 24th October 2008, six officers of the Maharashtra ATS entered the cell in which Chaturvedi was detained. The six officers were Sachin Kadam, Rajan Gole, Vivek Wakund, Sunil Yadav, Krishna Sawant and Sanjay Patil.

They covered Chaturvedi's face with a cloth and drove him in a private car to Mumbai.

Throughout the journey, Chaturvedi could hear the ATS officers talking "*We have to extract a confession from this bastard or else what are we going to say to the people up there?*"

After a three hour journey, the team reached Mumbai. Chaturvedi was dumped in a police jeep and taken to the Kalachowki Police Station. He was kept in a dark cell with his hands and legs tied.

That evening, Chaturvedi's cell-phone began ringing. The person at the other end was Sameer Kulkarni an activist of the Abhinav Bharat.

Kulkarni was an original native of Pune, Maharashtra. Having moved to Bhopal four years ago, Kulkarni was working in a printing press there.

On 18th September 2008, Kulkarni was arrested by the Jabalpur Police for vandalizing a cathedral there. He was currently out on bail.

ATS officer Krishna Sawant saw the phone ringing but, neither answered it nor gave it to Chaturvedi. Later, the ATS tracked the call and understood that the call was made from Bhopal.

The next day, Chaturvedi was dumped into a police jeep and driven to the Mumbai Airport. After reaching the airport, the ATS officers removed the mask on Chaturvedi's face and took him inside.

There, ATS officer Sachin Kadam introduced himself to the airport security official and, pointing a finger towards Chaturvedi, introduced him as Sangram Singh, a terrorist.

Kadam showed some papers to the airport security official after which they were allowed to pass through the VIP gate. The ATS officers then stuffed Chaturvedi in a car and whisked him away towards the plane.

Chaturvedi was terrified. He could sense something was wrong. But, he was helpless against the six muscular ATS officers.

Chaturvedi was loaded on a small private chartered plane owned by the India Bulls Company, an online securities portal, and flown to Bhopal.

From the Raja Bhoj Airport, Bhopal, Chaturvedi was taken to a hotel in a private car with his face covered.

After reaching the hotel, the face mask was removed and ATS officer Sachin Kadam told Chaturvedi to call back Sameer Kulkarni and tell him "*Meet me at the Habibganj Railway Station in an hour. I am leaving for Gwalior. Please come with me*".

A terrified Chaturvedi, did not want to face the wrath of the ATS once again and hence, obliged. He was then stuffed in the boot of a police jeep and taken to platform no. 3 of the Habibganj Railway Station.

After reaching there, ATS officer Krishna Sawant called Sameer Kulkarni from Chaturvedi's phone and introduced himself as Chaturvedi's assistant. Kulkarni informed Sawant of his exact location.

ATS officer Sachin Kadam, who was standing beside Sawant, informed his fellow officers present there over his own phone. The four other ATS officers walked up to the place where Kulkarni was standing and pounced on him.

Kulkarni, who was unaware of this conspiracy, began pleading with the ATS officers "*Why are you beating me? What have I done?*"

One by one, passengers standing at the platform gathered around to find out what the commotion was all about. Kadam told them that they had arrested a thief. The people believed him and slowly dispersed.

The ATS officers then tied Kulkarni's arms behind his back, covered his face with a black cloth and dragged him towards the police jeep standing outside the railway station.

Both Chaturvedi and Sameer Kulkarni were taken in the police jeep back to the hotel in Bhopal. Both were beaten black and blue throughout the night.

The next morning, Chaturvedi and Kulkarni were taken to the Raja Bhoj Airport, Bhopal by the six ATS officers to be flown back to Mumbai in the same private plane that was parked at the Bhopal airport throughout the night.

However, after entering the plane, the ATS officers found that there wasn't enough place for one person in the seven seat plane.

ATS officer Sachin Kadam told Krishna Sawant to get off the plane and fly to Mumbai in a commercial airline by booking his ticket in the name of Sameer Kulkarni. Sachin Kadam pulled out Sameer Kulkarni's ID proof from his wallet and handed it over to Krishna Sawant.

ATS officer Krishna Sawant did as he was told and got off the private plane. Within minutes, they were airborne and headed towards Mumbai.

After reaching Mumbai, Chaturvedi and Kulkarni were taken to the Kalachowki Police Station and kept in a dark cell. The tortures on Kulkarni continued.

Meanwhile, in another bizarre development, almost all major newspapers in Bhopal were carrying headline news that a terrorist called Sangram Singh has been brought to Bhopal by the ATS in connection with the Malegaon blasts.

The news agencies in Bhopal had got this information from their sources in the Madhya Pradesh Police. But, neither the national media nor the Maharashtra press covered this story.

However, it became clear in the months to follow that nobody called Sangram Singh was ever arrested by the ATS as an accused in the Malegaon blasts.

But, the records at the Mumbai Airport clearly state that, on 24th October 2008, a person called Sangram Singh did travel with six ATS officers to Bhopal in a private chartered plane owned by India Bulls.

This only proves beyond doubt that the person referred to by the MP press as Sangram Singh was none other than Sudhakar Chaturvedi.

Another big question that comes to mind is who financed this entire operation of flying a private jet to Bhopal then to Mumbai and back to Bhopal and back to Mumbai in addition to accommodation of its flying staff in a five star hotel in Bhopal for one night.

The ATS records do not show any such expenditure at all. This clearly means that there was an invisible force that was not only guiding the ATS but also financing this entire operation by the Maharashtra ATS.

The most deplorable part of this action is the manner in which Kulkarni was arrested. As per the law, the Maharashtra ATS can arrest an individual from Madhya Pradesh only after informing the local police.

This would not have been possible because Madhya Pradesh police would have asked for a warrant or incriminatory evidence against Kulkarni to permit the ATS to arrest him.

Further, whenever an accused is transported from one state to other, a transit remand is required with a scrutiny by MP police.

Thus, it was quite evident from the proceedings that the Maharashtra ATS had no such evidence or foolproof case against Kulkarni to secure his arrest.

Chapter 7

After getting hold of Sadhvi Pragya, Sudhakar Chaturvedi and Sameer Kulkarni, the ATS had set their sights on another potential target, Lt. Col. Prasad Purohit, a serving officer in the Military Intelligence Wing.

Born in Pune in a cultured, middle-class Brahmin family, Col. Purohit was commissioned into the Maratha Light Infantry in 1994 after passing out of the Officers' Training Academy at Chennai.

Between 2002 and early 2005, Col. Purohit was part of very important counter-terrorism operations in Jammu and Kashmir as part of MI-25 or the Intelligence Field Security Unit, tasked with keeping a close watch on infiltrations along the border.

During this tenure, Col. Purohit suffered a serious knee injury during anti-terrorist operations in Kashmir. His knee had to be reconstructed and the doctors advised him against any physical activity such as mountain climbing.

That made him unfit for resuming his earlier job in the Infantry Division of the Army. Hence, he was shifted to the Military Intelligence wing at Deoli near Nashik in Maharashtra as a liaison unit officer.

Here, Col. Purohit studied Arabic Language course at Panchmarhi in MP and remained professionally active in intelligence gathering.

Col. Purohit developed an effective intelligence network and was instrumental in gathering vital information about the infamous terror group, SIMI and its links with Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI.

After the Malegaon blasts of 2006 and the needle of suspicion pointing towards Hindu radical groups, Col. Purohit was given the task of snooping upon these fringe groups.

Col. Purohit accepted the challenge and established contact with a person named Ramesh Upadhyay, a retired Major who was one of the key architects in the revival of Abhinav Bharat, a right wing organization.

Through Maj. Upadhyay, Col. Purohit came into contact with Sudhakar Chaturvedi and other members of the group like Ajay Rahirkar, Jagdish Mahatre and Rakesh Dhawade.

Within two years, Col. Purohit had managed to win the confidence of the entire top brass of Abhinav Bharat and they too treated him as one of their own.

During this period, Col. Purohit trained Sudhakar Chaturvedi in the field of intelligence gathering and even registered his name in the Indian Army's official records as an Intelligence Operator.

However, after the Malegaon blasts of 2008, things were about to change drastically. The Maharashtra ATS propelled by an unknown driving force were hell bent on implicating Hindu organizations into terror attacks.

As their desperate effort to obtain the confession statement of Sadhvi Pragya was not yielding satisfactory results, the ATS decided to do something drastic.

On 23rd October 2008, at 11.30am, the Maharashtra ATS tapped Col. Purohit's cell phone and intercepted the conversation between him and Ramesh Upadhyay. Col. Purohit was at the AEC training Academy, Panchmarhi, Madhya Pradesh at that time.

This conversation between Ramesh Upadhyay and Col. Purohit was as follows;

Purohit: Jai Bharat

Upadhyay: Jai Bharat

Purohit: Sir, have you read the news in today's Times of India and Indian Express?

Upadhyay: Yes I have. The investigators are trying to implicate members of Hindu Jaagran Manch into this.

Purohit: Yes, you are right. This can only be the work of Singh (Paramveer).

Upadhyay: Absolutely

Purohit: Finally for Singh, the cat is out of the bag.

Upadhyay: Which news are you talking about?

Purohit: The same news.

Upadhyay: Same?

Purohit: Yes.

Upadhyay: Ok.

Purohit: I just received a call from the headquarters.

Upadhyay: What did they say?

Purohit: The same thing. I said ok and decided to call you right away.

Upadhyay: Look, there are two things here. One is to divert the country's attention (from scams).

Purohit: Absolutely

Upadhyay: The second ....when you don't find the real culprit, simply accuse anyone.

Purohit: Right Sir.

Upadhyay: What I fell is that .... Please don't misunderstand me .....They say, we set out in one direction and reached somewhere else.

Purohit: Who says so?

Upadhyay: The Mumbai Police .... Who else?

Purohit: You are absolutely right.

Upadhyay: I came to know from sources there .....Their spokesperson said that they wanted secrecy but somehow the news leaked to the media.

Purohit: Ok.

Upadhyay: I think it is a conspiracy. They say, an ABVP group from Indore is involved ..... A scooter was found.

Purohit: Ok.

Upadhyay: One person is saying something .....The other is saying something else.

Purohit: I see.

Upadhyay: Imagine if someone steals my scooter and uses it for crime, do I become a criminal?

Purohit: You are right, Sir.

Upadhyay: There is absolutely no connection between the dots. They say .... She did not lodge the complaint of her scooter being stolen .... She did not have the papers .... But, where is the link to a terror attack?

Purohit: Right.

Upadhyay: It has to be Singh.

Purohit: Definitely.

Upadhyay: Hmmm.

Purohit: Sir, How do you look at all this?

Upadhyay: I can only say from my experience ..... They will not stop just there. They will surely look for more scapegoats.

Purohit: Sir, I have one suggestion.

Upadhyay: Yes, sure.

Purohit: I recommend that you buy a new sim-card.

Upadhyay: Why? If they had any doubts on me, my name would have surfaced by now.

Purohit: Right.

Upadhyay: I would have been arrested by now.

Purohit: You are absolutely right, Sir. But, I was only suggesting for your own safety.

Upadhyay: I know.

Purohit: I would still suggest that you buy another sim-card.

Upadhyay: Another?

Purohit: Hmm … sim-card.

Upadhyay: And … Not on your name.

Purohit: Ok.

Purohit: Do it as soon as possible.

Upadhyay: Ok. I will see.

Purohit: I will call you at 2.00pm.

Upadhyay: Ok …. Do you suspect anything?

Purohit: No … No. But, we need to be careful.

Upadhyay: Ok then … I will speak with you at 2.00pm. Inform me of any further developments.

Purohit: Sure Sir. Goodbye.

Upadhyay: Thank you.

At 4.15pm, Cpl. Purohit called up Upadhyay once again. A conversation took place between the two which was as follows;

Purohit: Sir, Good Afternoon, Sir.

Upadhyay: Good Afternoon.

Purohit: No further developments.

Upadhyay: I see.

Purohit: I spoke to some people. They say that this is the handiwork of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

Upadhyay: I see.

Purohit: They say that the NCP has given orders to implicate the Sanatan Saunstha and ....

Upadhyay: I see.

Purohit: ....and Hindu Jaagran Manch. The NCP is now targeting the local branch of the Sanatan Saunstha here.

Upadhyay: Is it?

Purohit: Yes. By the way, I apologize for calling late. The battery of my phone was low.

Upadhyay: It's ok.

Purohit: A friend just called me. He said that there is a lot of commotion going on in the upper house of Parliament.

Upadhyay: I know. Vrinda Karat (Communist) and the others .... They are shouting at the top of their voice and saying that RSS ...

Purojit: I see.

Upadhyay: The secularist cartel is very happy. They are now demanding a complete ban on RSS, Bajrang Dal and ABVP.

Purohit: Is it?

Upadhyay: They are simply trying to earn political points. Nobody is talking about evidences. The ATS is spreading misinformation through their sources. Even the reporters are interested in their side of the story.

Purohit: Right.

Upadhyay: The ATS is saying that someone from Surat is arrested. Her friend (Pashricha) gave ATS the information on the basis of which they arrested her.

Purohit: I see.

Upadhyay: I know they are lying.

Purohit: I will tell you Sir. They have not found any evidence.

Upadhyay: I know ….nothing. She has not confessed as yet. It has come in the papers. They have only targeted former leaders from ABVP and Hindu Jaagran Manch.

Purohit: Which means ….the ABVP is not involved?

Upadhyay: They are only trying to manufacture concocted evidences in order to link the ABVP to the terror attack by hook or crook. This is a political game.

Purohit: Which means the NCP is behind it?

Upadhyay: Definitely. The Home Ministry is with them.

Purohit: Right.

Upadhyay: Raj Thakeray is accusing them (for shielding Muslims in the Malegaon blasts). Hence, they are trying to push the blame on Hindus.

Purohit: You have a point Sir.

Upadhyay: What else?

Purohit: Nothing new. As I told you my phone was off ....the battery was low.

Upadhyay: Have you spoken to Shyamji or Shankaracharya?

Purohit: No Sir. Shyamji had phoned me on my landline. But, I was not at home. So I called him. Dr. R.P. Singh is also in contact with me. I get a lot of information from him. But, he is not into all of this. They are all insane.

Upadhyay: That's right.

Purohit: Shankaracharya was in Delhi with Sadhvi (Pragya). Then, he went to Punjab where he met many people. He is now abroad to buy some land. This is what they say. They are now trying to form a management.

Upadhyay; I see .... I just got some news from Chattisgarh. The BJP and Congress have declared their candidates. I don't know why was I sent the news. Anyway, a news is a news.

Purohit: Right.

Upadhyay: Have you been able to contact Rahirkar or Nirali?

Purohit: No. I was busy. I will speak right away.

Upadhyay: Ok. Call me after speaking to him.

Purohit: Ok.

Upadhyay: Jai Bharat.

From the above conversation, it is evident that neither Col. Purohit nor Maj. Upadhyay were speaking anything related to the Malegaon terror conspiracy. Yet, the ATS used this as an evidence to implicate them.

What is even more baffling is that the Maharashtra ATS showed this evidence in court and stated that Col. Purohit and Maj. Upadhyay were conspiring to create a "*Hindu Rashtra*".

But, a big question emerges and that is why Col. Purohit's cell-phone was tapped by the ATS when there was not even an iota of suspicion on him.

Further, Chaturvedi's illegal abduction and the illegal tapping of Col. Purohit's phone took place within a gap of one hour. This clearly indicates that it was a well-planned operation by the Maharashtra ATS.

What is even more interesting is that Sudhakar Chaturvedi was a key source of information to Col. Purohit and was cultivated by Purohit in the field of intelligence gathering while he was posted at Nashik.

Chaturvedi was even registered in the army's official records by Purohit as an intelligence operator.

Thus, this action makes one point a finger at the political leadership of India.

Only the top brass of the Defence Ministry knew that Col. Purohit had infiltrated Hindu fringe groups and was snooping on the activities of the Abhinav Bharat.

The Indian Defence Ministry also knew that Sudhakar Chaturvedi was one of the sources of information to Col. Purohit.

This only makes one wonder whether the Government of India was the driving force behind the "*Saffron Terror*" conspiracy.

One would not be shocked if the answer was yes. But, the big mystery was ....Why?

Why was the Government of India so desperate to exonerate Pakistan from terror abetting charges and implicate innocent Hindu's in the terror conspiracy?

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Chapter 8

While one team of the ATS was busy flying down Chaturvedi to Mumbai in a private plane, another team of the Maharashtra ATS was busy laying the trap for Maj. Upadhyay in Deoli.

At daybreak, on 24th October 2008, Inspector Bagde called Maj. Upadhyay using Chaturvedi's cell phone and introduced himself as Chaturvedi's assistant.

Inspector Bagde called Maj. Upadhyay at the Deoli Petrol Pump, the same place where Chaturvedi was abducted by the ATS.

What followed was an exact replica of Chaturvedi's abduction. Maj. Upadhyay too was abducted from the same place and treated in the same manner as Chaturvedi.

Maj. Upadhyay was blindfolded and taken in a police jeep to the Deoli Police Station. There, he was kept in the same cell where Chaturvedi was kept a day before and beaten black and blue.

By noon, a team of the Maharashtra ATS led by DIG Sukhwinder Singh arrived at the Deoli Police Station after which Maj. Upadhyay was handed over to the ATS.

Sukhwinder Singh entered the cell and began kicking Maj. Upadhyay on his abdomen.

Maj. Upadhyay pleaded with Sukhwinder Singh to show mercy on him as he was a heart patient.

But, Sukhwinder Singh was unrelenting. He began abusing Maj. Upadhyay using filthy language.

Sukhwinder Singh said "*You Bastard ..... Your mother must have slept with all men in the village*".

But, seeing no reaction from Maj. Upadhyay, Sukhwinder Singh screamed "*If you don't confess your daughter Nidhi would be paraded naked and raped. We will plant narcotics in your house and get your son jailed for 20 years*".

Maj. Upadhyay asked Sukhwinder "*But confess to what?*"

Sukhwinder Singh said "*Confess that you and Col. Purohit were the planners of the Malegaon blasts*".

Maj. Upadhyay was taken aback. He told Sukhwinder Singh "*But, I have nothing to do with the Malegaon blasts. I came to know about it from the newspapers*".

But, Sukhwinder Singh was not satisfied with his answer. He ordered his men to "*beat the shit out of him till he confesses*" and left the cell.

The policemen continued to beat Maj. Upadhyay throughout the night.

The same day, Maharashtra ATS officials, led by Paramveer Singh, arrived on the outskirts of Indore at the residence of Ramji Kalsanghra.

Within minutes the entire neighborhood watched as the ATS officers dumped Ramji Kalsanghra, his brother Shivnarayan Kalsanghra and even Ramji's tenant, Shyam Sahu into their jeep and drove off.

However, the Maharashtra ATS claimed three days later in a press release that Ramji Kalsanghra had managed to escape as someone had tipped him off. He was eventually declared an absconder. Till date, nobody knows what happened to Ramji Kalsanghra.

It is ironic that the ATS, in their witch-hunt were pouncing on Hindu activists like a wild animal on its prey. They did not even bother to find out the connection between the suspects and their role in the crime.

It is noteworthy that Shivnarayan Kalsanghra was picked up just because he was Ramji's brother while Shyam Sahu owned a mobile phone shop. They were not even active members of the Indore based Hindu Jagran Manch.

The Maharashtra ATS, in their mad frenzy to please their political masters, were desperately looking out for scapegoats to be paraded in the court during the hearing slated for 3rd November 2008.

After abducting Ramji Kalsanghra, Shivnarayan Kalsanghra and Shyam Sahu, the ATS brought them to Mumbai by road from Indore in the same manner as Sameer Kulkarni i.e. without informing the Madhya Pradesh Police, without obtaining an arrest warrant and without securing a transit remand.

The same night, Maj. Upadhyay too was brought to Mumbai from Deoli. He too was detained along with the Kalsanghra brothers and Shyam Sahu at the Kalachowki Police Station, Mumbai.

Until now, a few Hindu radical groups were under the scanner of the Maharashtra ATS. But now, the ATS was about to do something unthinkable. It was about to drag the Indian Army into the "*Saffron Terror*" conspiracy.

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Chapter 9

In the wee hours of 25th October 2008, an officer of the Indian Army Col. Rajeev Kumar Shrivastav the Director of Military Intelligence – 9, came to meet Col. Purohit at his residence at the AEC School, Panchmarhi to inquire about his role in the Malegaon blasts.

Col. R.K. Shrivastav was accompanied by Brigadier Sandeep Kumar, Commandant at AEC School, Panchmarhi. They told Col. Purohit to come with them to the VIP guest room of the AEC Training College.

Col. Purohit dutifully obliged. From 1am to 3am, Col. Purohit was questioned about his alleged involvement in Malegaon Blasts.

Col. Purohit told Col. Shrivastav that he had already forwarded a handwritten report to Maj. Bhagirath Dey who was then posted as Intelligence Officer of the team at Jabalpur.

Col. Purohit further told Col. Shrivastav that, in addition he had provided telephonic information to Col Vinay Panchpore, Commanding Officer of Southern Command and Major Praveen Khanzode, Intelligence Officer Southern Command Deoli Unit.

At 3am, Col. Shrivastav ordered Brigadier Sandeep Kumar to leave the room. After Brig. Kumar had left, Col. Shrivastav took away Col. Purohit's cell phone so that he could not inform anyone what was happening to him.

Thereafter, Col. Shrivastav questioned Col. Purohit alone throughout the night till 8 AM. These entire proceedings were taking place without Col. Shrivastav having any written order by higher authorities to interrogate or question Col. Purohit.

At 8am, Col. Shrivastav looked satisfied with Col. Purohit's replies and left. In the next four days, Col. Purohit and Col. Shrivastav met two times at social get-togethers but this issue never cropped up.

Col Purohit was under the impression that this was just a routine inquiry due to his close association with the members of Abhinav Bharat.

But, little did he know that this was just the beginning of a storm which would eventually land him in jail for eight years.

Col. Purohit warning to Maj. Upadhyay to be careful was gradually becoming a reality. But, Col. Purohit wouldn't have imagined in his wildest dreams that he himself would be the next target of the Maharashtra ATS.

On 29th October 2008, at about 9am, Col. Purohit was called by Lt. Col. G.C. Mohanta, Adjutant, Army Education Corps College, to his office, and told that he would have to accompany Col. Shrivastav to New Delhi.

But, as per the army code of conduct, no army officer can go from one place to another without an official "*movement order*" which specifies to which destination the person is being sent and to whom he has to report.

Hence, Col. Purohit was handed a written order by Col. Shrivastav stating that he had to report to Integrated Headquarters of the Army (Ministry of Defence) for interaction with Military Intelligence20.

This order was handed over by Col. Shrivastav to Col. Purohit in the presence of Lt. Col. Mohanta and Lt. Col. Sanjay Kumar. Col. Purohit read the order and agreed to go to New Delhi.

As Col. Purohit was about to leave for Bhopal from Panchmarhi, he was ordered by Col. Shrivastav not to carry any mobile phone with him.

Col. Purohit protested against this and refused to surrender his cell phone as the order was blatantly illegal and was carried out without any letter of authority from higher officials.

But, Col. Shrivastav was adamant. He charged forward, snatched away Col. Purohit's phone and deposited it with the Adjutant AEC Training College.

Col. Purohit had to keep quiet since Col. Shrivastav was his senior and obedience to a senior's command is inculcated as a quintessential requirement in the army hierarchy. He silently walked towards the car standing outside and was driven away to the Bhopal airport.

After reaching the Raja Bhoj Airport, Bhopal, Col. Shrivastav did the check-in for both of them and summarily informed Purohit that they were going to Mumbai instead of Delhi.

Col. Purohit was shocked. He told Col. Shrivastav that this was a gross violation of army conduct rules as no officer was allowed to change the route or his destination in defiance of the "*movement order*".

Col. Shrivastav pulled out the movement order from his pocket, cancelled Delhi and wrote Mumbai with his pen.

He then showed the order to Col. Purohit and said "*Now, is it fine?*"

Col. Purohit agreed to go to Mumbai but requested Col. Shrivastav to let him make a call from a public phone and inform his wife or mother about the change in destination.

Col. Shrivastav not only prevented Col. Purohit from accessing a public phone but threatened him with physical violence if he tried to use a public phone facility.

Col. Purohit dutifully obeyed his senior officer and followed him to the aircraft.

The aircraft landed at the Mumbai airport at 11pm. After stepping out of the airport, Col. Purohit followed Col. Shrivastav to a white coloured Tata Sumo vehicle parked outside belonging to the Intelligence Bureau.

As Col. Purohit got closer to the vehicle, he saw two men sitting in the front of the vehicle, one on the rear seat and two in the boot area. They were all officers of the Maharashtra ATS led by Inspector Mohan Kulkarni.

Col. Shrivastav opened the rear door of the vehicle and told Col. Purohit to get inside the vehicle.

Col. Purohit followed Col. Shrivastav's orders and got inside the vehicle.

Suddenly, the two men sitting behind pounced on him and caught hold of his arms.

Then, Col. Shrivastav caught hold of his hands and the person sitting beside Col. Purohit pulled out a black ribbon and blindfolded him.

Col. Purohit's hands and legs were tied and he was whisked away by ATS.

After a two hour drive, they arrived at an unknown location.

Col. Purohit was dragged out of the jeep and taken to an interrogation room having no windows.

A team of interrogators were already present there. This team comprised of Maharashtra ATS and Intelligence Bureau officials. All of them were in civil dress.

Col. Purohit was interrogated by this combined team for almost two hours on the night of 29th Oct 2008.

After two hours of questioning, Col. Shrivastav suddenly sprung from his chair and initiated a brutal physical assault on Col. Purohit.

Col. Shrivastav slapped Col. Purohit on his face and screamed "*You swine! You bloody terrorist!*"

Col. Purohit was in shock over this sudden assault on him.

He looked at Col. Shrivastav with blank expressions on his face.

Co. Shrivastav began kicking Col. Purohit all over his body with his shoes on. He then started pulling Col. Purohit's hair on head and chest. Col. Purohit began yelling in pain. He was then tied to a chair.

Col. R K Shrivastav stood on Col. Purohit's legs and inhumanly started twisting his nipples and private parts (genitals) with all his strength.

Col. Shrivastav once again started hitting Col. Purohit on his face and punching him on his abdomen. His face was totally swollen.

The ATS and Intelligence Bureau officers standing near Purohit were silent spectators until now. They were reluctant to use muscle power on a serving army officer.

But, spurred by Col. Shrivastav's physical assault on Col. Purohit, they too shed their inhibition of carrying out physical tortures on a serving army officer and joined in.

Col. Shrivastav caught hold of Col. Purohit's hair on head while the ATS officers tortured him. Col. Purohit was in an absolute state of shock and totally shattered by this physical assault carried out by Col. R K Shrivastav.

This nightmare of physical assaults on Col. Purohit, tying him to a chair, hitting, slapping, twisting of private parts and standing on his legs continued unabated. These tortures on Col. Purohit were coupled with dirtiest possible abuses on his mother, wife and sister.

Col. Shrivastav kept on threatening Col. Purohit "*If you don't confess to your involvement in the Malegaon Bomb Blast, your wife and sister will be stripped and paraded naked in front of everyone*"

Col. Purohit asked Col. Shrivastav "*How can I own up something which I am not even aware of?*"

The sequence of beating and brutal torture was intermittently on with Colonel Shrivastav abusing Col. Purohit using filthy language against his mother, wife and sister.

Col. Purohit was totally broken down and traumatized, both physically and mentally. He was not allowed to talk to his family members even once over the telephone.

For over a week, he was confined to the same unknown private establishment in Khandala with round the clock police guard guarding it.

Worried by his absence, Col. Purohit's wife Aparna Purohit inquired at the AEC. But, Lt. Col G.C. Mohanta the Adjutant AEC Centre claimed his unawareness about the whereabouts of Col. Purohit.

In the records of the army, Col. Purohit was reported as a "*missing person*" because he left Panchmarhi on the basis of a "*movement order*" listing his destination as Delhi.

However, Col. Purohit never reached Delhi nor reported to the army headquarters. He would eventually be incarcerated in jail without trial for almost eight years.

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Chapter 10

Meanwhile, on 28th October 2008, the Deputy Superintendent of Gujrat Police, K K Mysorewala, who was heading the probe into the Modasa attacks came down to Mumbai to interrogate Maj. Upadhyay and the four activists of Abhinav Bharat arrested by the Maharashtra ATS.

To everyone's horror, Mysorewala disclosed "*We have interrogated all the five who are currently in the custody of Mumbai police in connection with the Malegaon blast. None of them are involved in the Modasa blast*"

This disclosure by Mysorewala completely baffled everyone as the explosives report had clearly mentioned that the type of bombs used in Malegaon and Modasa were exactly the same.

On the heels of Mysorewala's disclosure, Shiv Sena, a right wing Hindu political party came out strongly in support of the accused, saying the arrests of Hindu activists were merely political in nature.

In their mouthpiece "*Saamna*", the Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray called these arrests as a conspiracy and pointed fingers at their political rivals, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which controlled the Home ministry.

The same day, senior BJP leader, L. K. Advani, also accused the Maharashtra ATS of acting in a politically motivated and unprofessional manner.

Speaking on the floor of the Indian Parliament, Advani alleged "*It has become clear that the ATS is acting in a politically-motivated and unprofessional manner*"

"After going through her affidavit, I have to express my shock and outrage, which I am sure all Indians will share. In view of the shocking charges made against the ATS by the Sadhvi and the fact that the present investigating team has lost all moral authority, I demand a change in the present ATS team and a judicial inquiry

Chapter 11

Meanwhile, the Maharashtra ATS was under severe pressure from their political masters to fabricate evidence against Pragya before the court hearing.

Finally, on 27th October 2008, the Maharashtra ATS filed an application before the Nasik joint civil judge, senior division A N Khadse to conduct a polygraph, brain mapping and narco test on Pragya.

The request for narco test came as a huge surprise as the Maharashtra ATS officers, under Hemant Karkare, knew very well that Pragya was innocent and was being falsely implicated in the Malegaon blast case.

Thus, what could be the motive of the Maharashtra ATS behind conducting this narco test?

On 31st October 2008, the Maharashtra ATS conducted brain-mapping and polygraph tests on Pragya at the Kalina Forensic Science Laboratory in Santa Cruz (East), Mumbai. She was also put through narco-analysis tests.

As expected, Pragya came out completely clean in all those tests. It was no big surprise to the Maharashtra ATS as they knew beforehand that the results would be negative.

But, to the sheer horror of the Maharashtra ATS, someone on the department leaked the results of the narco test to the media.

The news of Pragya coming clean on the narco tests instantly became national headlines. Several questions began to be raised on the handling of this case by the ATS.

The news leak on Pragya's narco test came as a huge shock and embarrassment for the Maharashtra ATS. Thus, they decided to switch to damage control mode.

On 1st November 2008, the spokesperson of Maharashtra ATS, in a press briefing, stated "*She has tested negative on a set of questions on the Malegaon blast in her narco test but that doesn't conclusively rule out the Indore angle in the case. The tests have yielded important clues on their clandestine network. The clandestine network of the Hindu right wing groups is turning out to be a much wider than what was thought*"

The Maharashtra ATS however refused to disclose the details of the "*Clandestine Network*" citing excuses that the matter was sensitive in nature.

The same day, a team of Maharashtra ATS raided the Pune office of the Abhinav Bharat and took four of its activists along with them. The four activists were Ajay Rahirkar, Jagdish Mhatre, Sandeep Dange and Rakesh Dhawade

Though the Maharashtra ATS did not give any reasons for arresting them without a warrant, they later clarified that the four activists were being taken away only for questioning.

However, within days, these four would be formally arrested and would eventually spend over eight years in jail without any evidence against them.

The intentions of the Maharashtra ATS behind conducting the narco test on Pragya were now becoming clear. Through the narco test, they only wanted to track down the network of Abhinav Bharat.

Following the arrest of Abhinav Bharat activists and the news leak of Pragya's narco test the intentions of an invisible "*Hand*" behind implicating innocent Hindus to appease Muslims were becoming clear. It was now the turn of BJP to turn aggressor and put pressure on the Maharashtra ATS to prove the charges.

On 2nd November 2008, the Madhya Pradesh unit of BJP demanded that the details of three narco-tests conducted by the Maharashtra ATS be made public.

The state unit vice-president Anil Dave, in a press conference, said "*The ATS must tell the nation what it had found after conducting three narco-tests on Sadhvi Pragya*"

Dave further demanded that the ATS must submit its report in the court of law instead of selectively leaking it to the media and advised the ATS not to act as a judge in the matter. He also asked the human right groups to take cognizance of the fact that Pragya was tortured in the custody of the ATS.

But, the Government of India rubbished the demands of the BJP saying that the ATS were doing a fine job. If that was so, then why the Maharashtra ATS was reluctant to make the details of the narco test public?

Was there more to hide than to disclose? If so ....then what?

On 3rd November 2008, Pragya was produced before a packed courtroom of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Nasik.

As the proceedings began, the Chief Judicial Magistrate asked the prosecution to present evidence against the accused Pragya Singh Thakur.

The ATS presented a telephonic conversation which they had intercepted on 8th October 2008. The ATS claimed that Pragya Singh was talking to Ramji Kalsanghra the two were heard talking about the bike used in the blasts.

Pragya argued "*Your Honour, I agree that it was me talking on the phone. But, I was not talking about any terror attack*"

But, the prosecution argued "*Your Lordship, the prosecution has evidence that the two were indeed talking about the terror attack*"

The prosecution then presented the statement of Sadhvi Pragya's close aide (name undisclosed) who allegedly received her at the Ujjain Railway Station.

The statement read;

"*I received Sadhvi Pragya at The Ujjain Railway Station at around 11.00am. From the railway station, Sadhvi Pragya called up one of her colleague and requested him to book a room for her at the Mahakaal Dhar-*

mashala in Ujjain. Thereafter, both Sadhvi Pragya and I boarded an auto-rickshaw and went to the Mahakaal Dharmashala. Within 25 minutes of reaching the Mahakaal Dharmashala, a person named Arvind Jain entered the room to meet Sadhvi Pragya"

"Sadhvi Pragya introduced me to Jain and then requested me to leave the room. I obeyed her command and left the room. Sadhvi Pragya spoke to Arvind Jain for almost 30 minutes. After Jain left, I entered the room and saw Sadhvi Pragya in conversation with someone over the phone. After she had finished speaking, I asked her 'Whom were you speaking to?' to which she replied 'It was Ramji Kalsanghra'"

The witness further said in his statement;

"At 2.00pm, Ramji Kalsanghra came rushing to meet Sadhvi Pragya at the Mahakaal Dharmashala. He was wearing a helmet as he entered the room. Ramji entered Sadhvi Pragya's room and shut the door. Sadhvi Pragya asked Ramji 'What's the matter? Why are you looking so terrified?' Ramji removed his helmet, sported a smile on his face and sat on the opposite couch. I was seated on a chair close by. Thereafter, they entered into a conversation which was as follows";

"Pragya: I am leaving for Surat tomorrow.

Ramji: Why?

Pragya: The blast which you carried out ....in Malegaon ....using my bike ... The police have found the bike. They have called me for questioning.

Ramji: Which means ....they are going to ask you about the bike.

Pragya: Yes. But, I will tell them that I have sold it.

Ramji: But, the police will ask you about the proof.

Pragya: I will tell them that I don't remember.

Ramji: The police won't believe it. They will ask for papers.

Pragya: I will tell them that the papers are lost.

Ramji: The police will ask where have you sold the bike … Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh or Maharashtra.

Pragya: I will tell them Gujrat …… When? … I don't remember.

Ramji: The police won't believe it.

Pragya: Let's see. If they believe it, well and good. I am going expecting the worse.

Ramji: Ok. If everything goes well ….fine. Or else, tell them my name. Tell them that I carried out the attacks.

Pragya: But, I don't understand one thing. If this blast really took place using my bike, how did so less people die?

Ramji: I tried to park the vehicle in a crowded locality. But, they did not allow me to park it. So, I had to park it at a less crowded area.

Pragya: But, how did the police trace the bike from whatever little had remained?

Ramji: I had erased the engine no, chassis no and handle lock. Yet, how the police managed to trace the bike …I don't know.

Pragya: I spoke to Arvindji about this. He told me that over one lakh people will be assembled outside the police station if I am framed by the police.

Ramji: That's fine. Let us see".

"At around 4.00pm Ramji handed over Rs.15000 to Sadhvi Pragya and left. At 7.00pm, Arvind Jain entered the room. He assured her of every help from his end and left. I left a few minutes later. The next day, at 12.00, I returned back to the Dharmashala. I had lunch with Sadhvi Pragya. At 3.30pm, I dropped her at the railway station from where she boarded the Indore-Pune Express for Surat"

Sadhvi Pragya argued that nobody had received her at the Ujjain Railway Station that day and the Maharashtra ATS were presenting fake witnesses.

But, the Chief Judicial Magistrate accepted the claims of the prosecution and sent Pragya Singh to judicial custody.

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Chapter 12

Though the ATS had secured the custody of Pragya Singh Thakur, they were finding it very difficult to gather evidences against Sudhakar Chaturvedi.

Finally, on 4th November 2008, the ATS registered an offence against Chaturvedi for illegally possessing a revolver without license. The offence was registered at the Matunga Police Station in Mumbai.

Ironically, the officer who registered the offence happened to be an ex-officer of the Maharashtra ATS who was transferred to the Matunga Police Station a few days back. The big question was ..... Whether he was brought there specifically for this purpose?

Thus, Sudhakar Chaturvedi was officially arrested for illegal possession of fire arms and was sent to the Matunga Police Station.

On 5th November 2008, Sudhakar Chaturvedi was paraded before the Judicial Magistrate in Kurla Mumbai.

As Chaturvedi stood in the courtroom, he saw eight ATS officers in civilian dress standing among the crowd staring at him.

Chaturvedi then saw two lawyers talking to one another. He later understood that one amongst them was his own defence lawyer who was appointed specially by the ATS to goof up his defence.

Chaturvedi had never appointed a lawyer and neither did any of his relatives as nobody knew of his whereabouts since the day he was abducted by the ATS from Deoli.

As the proceedings began, the Magistrate asked Chaturvedi "*Did the police ill treat you?*"

For over a week, Col. Purohit could neither meet his family members nor engage the services of a lawyer. He too was subjected to brutal torture by the ATS.

Hemant Karkare assisted by Khanvilkar, Paramveer Singh and Sachin Kadam unleashed a brutal physical assault on Col. Purohit.

Col. Purohit was hung upside down to the ceiling of the interrogation chamber and beaten with leather belts throughout the day and into the night.

Col. Purohit kept pleading with Karkare "*Please don't do this. I have undergone a knee reconstruction surgery during my tenure in the army*"

But, Karkare was unrelenting. He kept up the torture on Col. Purohit. Khanvilkar and Paramveer Singh caught hold of Col. Purohit's legs and pulled them apart.

Col. Purohit yelled in pain. However, despite the brutal assaults on him, Col. Purohit refused to bow down and refused to confess.

On 6th November 2008, a narco-test and brain mapping was conducted on Col. Purohit at the Kalina Forensic Laboratory in Mumbai.

But, just like Pragya Singh Thakur, Col. Purohit too came out completely clean on the tests. This time too, the media came to understand the results of the narco-test.

The ATS came under tremendous pressure to produce strong evidence against Col. Purohit before he was presented before the Judicial Magistrate on 17th November

On 7th November 2008, a team of the Maharashtra ATS left for Ujjain to hunt down their next potential target, a Hindu godman named Shankaracharya Swami Amrutanand Dev Tirth alias Dayanand Pandey.

Dayanand Pandey was the head of the Sharada Sarvagya Peeth in Jammu and a staunch Hindu activist fighting for the rights of displaced Kashmiri Hindus.

That evening, the ATS officers arrived at the Mutt in Ujjain and requested Pandey to come over to the police station to answer a few questions regarding Col. Purohit.

Dayanand Pandey dutifully obliged. What followed was an exact replica of Sudhakar Chaturvedi and Ramesh Upadhyay's arrest.

On 12th November, ATS officer Dilip Shreeraocalled Capt. Nitin Dattatraya Joshi, a retired army officer and requested him to come over to the ATS office at the Kala Chowki Police Station, Mumbai.

Capt. Joshi dutifully responded by arriving in Mumbai the same evening. Dilip Shreerao took him inside the ATS headquarters and showed him the torture chamber where Col. Purohit was held captive.

Capt. Joshi saw the plight of Col. Purohit who displayed clear signs of torture. Dilip Sheerao told Capt. Joshi to cooperate with them or else face the same consequences as Col. Purohit.

Captain Joshi was shown a brief glimpse of Col. Purohit in order to convey the message that if a serving officer of the Indian Army could be reduced to such a hapless, pathetic state, a retired Captain like him could face much worse unless he "*co-operated with the ATS*".

Dilip Sheerao told Joshi, "*If we can arrest a serving Lt. Col. and a Shankracharya, we can easily do the same with you and your family members*"

Shreerao further threatened Capt. Joshi that false cases would be slapped against him as an accomplice in the crime if he does not do what they tell him to do..

Capt. Joshi was then thrown into a dirty cell and put at the mercy of crude constables who abused him in the foulest of language under the guise of "*interrogation*".

Finally, Capt. Joshi succumbed and agreed to give whatever statement that the ATS wanted him to give after which, he was let off from the lock up and allowed to stay at the residence of his relatives at Parel.

During this period when Joshi went to spend the night in Parel, an ATS constable accompanied him like a shadow and slept in the same house.

Next morning, Capt. Joshi was produced before another ATS officer Mohan Kulkarni, who dictated a statement to Capt. Joshi which he had to give before a Judicial Magistrate under section 164.

The statement was then given a final shape in the office of Dileep Shreerao in consultation with the ATS chief Hemant Karkare.

The statement read;

"I was a very close friend of Col. Purohit and a frequent visitor to his house. Purohit was a staunch anti-Muslim with a very revengeful mindset ....."

"Purohit had given me three weapons and some ammunition to be kept in my house for a month sometime in 2006. He kept two pistols one revolver and some bullets in his possession. None of them were licensed ....."

"Sometime in 2008, Purohit held a meeting in Nasik. Ramji, Sandeep Dange, Kulkarni Rakeash Dhawade and Maj. Upadhyay were present ....."

"Purohit later told me that a big action will take place in Nasik district in Aug-Sept. Later, Purohit confessed to me about planning and executing the Malegaon blast along with his accomplices ....."

"One day, while I was at his residencein Deoli, I saw a green sack containing RDX. Purohit told me that he had supplied RDX to a person called Dr. Dev for the Samjhauta Express blast that took place on Feb 2008 at Panipat. Purohit further told me that he, Chaturvedi and Ramji had manufactured the bomb at Chaturvedis house ....."

"One day in Sept 2008, a person told Purohit in my presence that the RSS Indresh Kumar and Mohan Bhagwat take money from Pakistan ISI for anti-national activities hence they should be killed ....."

"He showed a secret document from Purohit which mentioned 21 crores being paid by Pakistan's ISI to Indresh Kumar. This man even showed Purohit the place where Bhagwat was supposed to stay during his visit there and even showed him the meeting hall ....."

Following Capt. Joshi's confession, the ATS spread the message that it had received an anonymous phone call in which the informer had given them some vital clues regarding Col. Purohit's role in the terror attacks.

A senior Maharashtra ATS officer, disclosing to the press, said "*The witness heard Purohit linking* (Sunil) *Joshi to the train's firebombing. The witness further claimed that Purohit made the claim after a December 29, 2007, phone call, when he was informed of Joshi's death. After the phone call, our witness says Lieutenant-Colonel Purohit credited Sunil Joshi with having executed the Samjhauta Express attack, and hailed him as a martyr*"

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Chapter 13

After obtaining Capt. Joshi's statement, the ATS set out to find a scapegoat who could corroborate it. Their search ended on the doorsteps of a person called Shyam Apte, a former member of the RSS.

Shyam Apte was picked up and a confession was obtained from him in the same manner as Capt. Joshi. The confession statement of Shyam Apte was an exact replica of Capt. Joshi's statement.

The statement read;

"I was abroad for a business trip, but returned back due to fading health. Thereafter I set up my own organization in spiritual service. I was based at the Maharashi, University road, Pune, Maharashtra"

"I was a RSS worker in my youth. After business, my association with RSS reduced. After returning to India, I found that the RSS of today is different than that of yesterday. Hence I kept away from RSS"

"In 2002, I started writing. Three years ago, Col. Purohit came to my house and introduced himself. I asked him who recommended my name. He dodged the question. We kept meeting regularly"

"Purohit told me about Abhinav Bharat. But, I did not pay much attention to it. March 2008, Purohit introduced me to Swami Teerth in Jammu. Later that year I met the Swami when he visited Pune"

"Swami told me that he is working for displaced Kashmiri Hindus in Jammu. I was very influenced by his work and decided to help him. I also understood that Purohit and the Shankaracharya were very close"

"Purohit was posted at Panchmarhi. In July 2008, Shankaracharya was supposed to visit Pune. I arranged his stay at Saradas Residency at Chatushrunghi"

"After he arrived, I went to meet him. That time, a businessman for Koregaon Park named Jindal was also there. Shankaracharya, Mr. X and I discussed about the plight of Kashmiri Hindus with him. That time Mr. X was asked to donate some money for the work which he agreed"

"That time I understood that Mr. X and Purohit are very close. One day I and Ajay Rahirkar went to Mr. X's house. That time, he gave Rs. 10 lakh cash to Ajay Rahirkar, of which Rs. 5 lakh was for Shankaracharya and Rs. 5 lakh was for Purohits Abhinav Bharat"

"One day Purohit called me to meet Shankaracharya in Indore. I was unwell and hence could not go. But, Purohit insisted that I come with Ajay Rahirkar. On 1 Aug 2008, Rahirkar and I booked tickets on Kingfisher Airlines and reached Indore"

"There, we stayed at the Sayaji Hotel. A room was booked on my name. I stayed with Rahirkar. Purohit had also booked a room there"

"On 2nd Aug 2008, Purohit arrived there with his family. At 10.30am, Shankaracharya arrived at the hotel. I and Rahirkar went to Purohit's room"

"We were there till 11am. Shankaracharya decided to go to Ujjain hence I was about to leave the room. Just then I heard Purohit asking Shankaracharya for Rs. 1 lakh"

"That night, Purohit left for Mumbai and told that he would return the next day. He told me that he plans to meet Praveen Togadia (VHP leader)"

"Thereafter, we went along with the Swami to Ujjain and reached there at 4PM. There we discussed about helping Hindus in Kashmir. That night Rahirkar met a person called Ramji"

"On 3rd Aug 2008, we returned back from Ujjain. On 11th Aug 2008, I went by a Kingfisher Airlines flight at 14.30 from Pune to Indore to meet the Swami"

"After reaching the airport, I was driven to Ujjain in the Swami's car. Thereafter, I stayed at the Mutt. During that time we discussed the Kashmir Hindu problem"

"On 15th Aug 2008, I returned to Pune by Kingfisher Airlines. On 20th Aug 2008, Swami came to Pune from Jammu. He stayed at Mr. Y's house at Senapati Bapat Road. He held a press conference and briefed the press about the attacks on the Amarnath Yatra"

"Next day, we went to the RSS office at Motibag and met the RSS chief Sudarshan"

"On 29th Aug 2008, at 14.30 I left for Indore. From there, I proceeded in the Swami's car to Ujjain. I met Swami and stayed at the Mutt"

"On 30th Aug 2008 the Swami said that Sri Sri Ravishankar has offered to help the victims in Kashmir. On 31st Aug 2008, 5.30am, I understood that Purohit came to the Mutth and met Swami. But, I was resting in my room so I don't know about the conversation"

"At 11am, I met Purohit and discussed many issues. I asked Purohit as to how is he pursuing his involvement with Abhinav Bharat while still with the army?"

"On 31st Aug 2008, at 12.20, i returned back to Pune by Kingfisher Airlines. On 12th Sept 2008, I went to Indore by Kingfisher Airlines and stayed for two days there"

"On 14th Sept 2008, I returned to Pune at 12.20pm. A day later, Purohit and I went to Bangalore and met Sri Sri Ravishankar and requested his help for Kashmiri Hindus. But, he said that he would not give any help but give aid"

"Until now, I have given one lakh regularly to Shankaracharya. I have also given Rs. 2 lakh and two cheques of Rs. 25000 from friends"

"Until now Purohit told me about Abhinav Bharat and its activities in MP. But, all his views were 'Savarkarvadi'. I did not agree to them hence I did not involve with him. I repeatedly warned him that he cannot do such things while serving the army. But, he never listened to me"

"One day he brought Maj, Upadhyay to me and introduced him. I did not agree with Upadhyay's views and warned Purohit to be careful form Upadhyay"

"I never met Pragya, Ramji, Sandeep Dange, Kulkarni Rakeash Dhawade nor do I know them. But I know Sharad Kunte as he was with me in RSS"

"One day Purohit showed me a secret document in which Pakistans ISI allegedly gave the RSS minority front leader Indresh Kumar 21 crores. He also told me that senior RSS leaders had no knowledge about it"

"I was shocked to read it. I warned RSS leader Mohan Bhagwat about it. But, he ignored it. I felt that taking money from ISI is betraying the country. Thus I felt angry"

"In my fury I told Purohit to kill Bhagwat and Indresh and left. I told this even to Shankaracharya. I did not mean what I had said. I told Purohit to warn Sudershan about it and even arranged a meeting. Purohit went to Jabalpur and met him. But, I don't know what decision he took"

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Chapter 14

Meanwhile, the army was under tremendous pressure following the arrest of Maj. Upadhyay and Col. Purohit in the Malegaon blast case.

On 7th November 2008, the army constituted a court of inquiry to probe Col. Purohits involvement in the Malegaon blast case.

During the Army's Court of Inquiry, two army officers, Major Praveen Khanzode and Subedar Keshav R Pawar, stated that on 3rd November 2008, i.e. 2 days before Purohit's official arrest, that they had caught Inspector Shekhar Bagade of Maharashtra ATS red handed while he was planting evidence at Chaturvedi's house.

Major Khanzode recalled that Subedar Pawar called him to say that Inspector Bagade of Nashik ATS had called him on his mobile and asked him for directions and keys to Sudhakar Chaturvedi's house.

Khanzode asked Pawar to convey to Bagade to wait while he took clearance from his Commanding Officer. This clearance was necessary since Chaturvedi was a key informer for the army.

This clearance came within 10 minutes but when Khanzode communicated this to Pawar, the latter told him that Bagade had said that he had been recalled to his office and he was rushing back to Nashik.

Pawar and Khanzode found this a bit strange since they knew that Bagade was in the know of Chaturvedi's residential address.

At 4.00pm, Pawar and Khanzode decided to go and check Chaturvedi's house to make sure everything was in order. Khanzode drove the scooter while Subedar Pawar was riding pillion.

Pawar further testified that while he was turning his scooter near Chaturvedi's house, Pawar got down from the vehicle and went in to check on the house.

By the time Khanzode came over, he saw Pawar coming out of the open door of Chaturvedi's house. Pawar had gone in because he was shocked to find the house door open and decided to walk in. There he found API Bagade all alone doing something on the floor.

It is a mandatory legal requirement that if someone's house or official premises are to be searched in the person's absence, there has to be either "*Panchas*" (official witnesses) or a proper '*Panchnama*' (affidavit on the spot of any evidence of wrong doing).

But when caught in Chaturvedi's house by Pawar and Khanzode, Bagade was all alone in that house. He did not even make pretence of preparing a '*Panchnama*'.

Bagade got nervous seeing him suddenly drop in and pleaded with Pawar to not inform anybody of this incident, especially his seniors or else that would endanger his job and might prove dangerous for him in other ways as well.

This incident was reported by Major Khanzode to all his seniors in Deoli and also to Headquarters Southern Command, Pune.

Thus, Major Khanzode and Subedar Pawar testified in favour of Purohit and stated that the RDX traces recovered by ATS from Chaturvedi's house were in all likelihood planted by Inspector Bagade.

Even Col. Shrivastav gave a statement in the Army Court of Inquiry that Sudhakar Chaturvedi's house was searched in the first or second week of November. Shrivastav also said that he knew the contents of Chaturvedi's house beforehand.

Khanzode told the Court of Inquiry that he had also recounted this incident to a number of officers at HQ SCLU Pune on November 4 and November 5, 2008.

Khanzode then told the Court of Inquiry that, on 11th November 2008, officers of the Maharashtra ATS along with Col. Shrivastav opened Col. Purohit's personal lockers and decamped with some of his belongings including a laptop. This search was conducted by the ATS without obtaining the written permission of the army.

During the army's Court of Inquiry, a total of 59 witnesses stated to the court, along with Officers who testified, that Purohit was doing his job of gathering intelligence inputs by infiltrating extremist organizations.

On 15th November 2008, the army submitted its report to the Defense Ministry which said that the ATS jumped to a conclusion in "*utter haste without ascertaining the intelligence they have collected about the tainted Army officer who belonged to the Intelligence Wing*"

The report mentioned Col. Purohit consistently sending ground reports from Maharashtra on an array of fringe groups on a range of militant activities.

The report also stated Col. Purohit's accurate warnings and intelligence report had alerted and warned the Government of India of trouble brewing in Malegaon.

The CoI report stated Col. Purohit as "*by all accounts an outstanding officer*" who was diligently doing his job as an intelligence officer.

The army report also raised several questions on the manner in which Col. Purohit was illegally moved from Panchmarhi to Mumbai with his movement order forged.

The army report ridiculed the Maharashtra ATS by saying that the "*ATS officers, who are supposed to counter-terror operations, have no idea as to how military intelligence works*"

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Chapter 15

The army's Court of Inquiry report created a stir in the national media. Several questions began to be raised at the ATS for illegally framing an honest serving army officer through maliciously fabricated evidences.

But, the ATS dismissed the army's CoI report and counter-contended that they had strong evidence of Col. Purohit's involvement in terror attacks.

A section of left-leaning media came to the defence of the ATS claiming that "*Some army officers were trying to defend their colleague*"

Following the army's clean chit to Col. Purohit, the ATS caught itself walking on thin ice. Many people began accusing them of working for Pakistan.

The ATS had no option but to obtain the confession of Col Purohit by hook or crook. The opportunity came walking right inside their doorsteps.

On the evening of 15th November, Col. Purohit's wife Aparna Purohit was allowed to meet her husband at the Taloja Central Prison along with her lawyer.

After a brief meeting with her husband, Aparna Purohit was forcibly detained by the ATS chief, Hemant Karkare at the Taloja Central Jail.

ATS chief, Hemant Karkare tried to instigate Aparna against her own husband by falsely alleging that Col. Purohit was having extra marital affairs. However, Aparna Purohit refused to believe the ATS chief.

Karkare then used abusive and extremely derogatory language including obscenities and insulting remarks against Aparna Purohit.

The ATS instead slapped charges of illegal occupation of firearms on Col. Purohit based on the statement of Milind Date alone.

Thus, it was proved beyond doubt that the confession of Purohit was only meant to be shown on the national media and misguide the people of the country regarding the army's Court of Inquiry report..

The ATS sought further custody of Col. Purohit to gather more evidences.

The ATS further demanded that they may be given permission to question at least three more officers of the Indian Army in this regard.

Col. Purohit's defense alleged that their client was being victimized as he was in possession of intelligence data of a sensitive nature pertaining to SIMI and ISI operations, which could embarrass many politicians in India.

The Judicial Magistrate accepted the demands of the prosecution and sent Col. Purohit to judicial custody. The court also accepted the demand to question three officers of the Indian Army.

Two of these three officers were Maj. Ramesh Upadhyay and Capt. Nitin Joshi who were already in their custody. The third was Maj. Praveen Khanzode.

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Chapter 15

On 18th November 2008, Captain Nitin Joshi was to be produced by the ATS in court no. 18 before the Girgaum Judicial Magistrate. Before leaving for the court, ATS officer Mohan Kulkarni took Capt. Joshi to a room inside the ATS office.

There, Kulkarni threatened Joshi with a loaded pistol in hand saying, "*Do not dare to retract in front of the magistrate or else one bullet from this will be lodged in your brain.*"

A terrified Capt. Joshi walked into the chamber of the Judicial Magistrate and read out whatever Mohan Kulkarni had told him.

What happened next was even more deplorable. After Joshi's statement was recorded, it was not sealed as is the mandatory requirement. Instead, it was simply put into an envelope which was then stapled.

A week later, Joshi was again called to Nasik ATS office where the investigating officer again threatened him with dire consequences for him and his family, if he even thought about retracting his statement.

All these events led to his estrangement from the Bhonsala Military School and he ended up resigning from there after a few weeks.

Capt. Joshi's confession proved the crucial evidence for the ATS in securing the arrest of Col. Purohit and implicating him in the Saffron Terror case.

However, a year later, it would also turn out to be the biggest embarrassment to the Maharashtra ATS.

On 5th October 2009, Captain Joshi wrote a formal complaint to the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (MSHRC) alleging that he had been threatened, blackmailed and coerced by the ATS into falsely implicating Col. Purohit in the terror case.

In his testimony before the MSHRC Captain Joshi said that, with the prospect of "*being implicated in false cases and the same happening to his family*", he agreed to give whatever statement that the ATS wanted him to give.

Joshi disowned the statement extracted from him by the ATS saying that he could not live with this guilt for long since he fell in his own eyes for having failed to withstand the coercive tactics of ATS despite being a military officer.

Therefore, he felt compelled to file a complaint before the Human Rights Commission regarding the illegal and unconstitutional methods adopted by the ATS to obtain "false statements" from him.

Joshi appealed to the Commission to protect him from further harm and take up his case as one of gross violation of his human rights. He also sought damages worth Rs. 25 lakhs.

Although this case was filed on 5/10/2009 before the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission, no action whatsoever has been taken on it so far.

The MSHRC had even sought permission to question the accused officers of the Maharashtra ATS who coerced Capt. Joshi to give the false statement.

But, the permission was never given by the Congress ruled Maharashtra Government.

This testimony of Captain Nitin Joshi only raises big questions on the way the Maharashtra ATS and the Indian Administration handled this case.

Following Capt. Nitin Joshi's backtracking Shyam Apte too backtracked from his statement and admitted that he too was coerced to give his statement by the ATS.

Such was the obsession of the Indian Government with '*Saffron Terror*' that they were determined to exonerate Pakistan based terror organizations and prove that Hindus were terrorists "*At all costs*".

The big question is ..... Why?

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Chapter 16

On 23rd November 2008, all the accused arrested in the Malegaon blast case were produced before the Sessions Court in Mumbai.

The ATS presented evidence in the form of Col. Purohit's laptop which was seized from his personal locker in Panchmarhi.

The ATS told the court that Col. Purohit, Chaturvedi and Pragya Singh all co-conspirators of the Malegaon Blast had planned "*a dangerous conspiracy*".

According to the Maharashtra ATS;

Col. Purohit had collected "*huge amounts*" to the tune of Rs 21 lakh for himself and Abhinav Bharat to promote his "*fundamentalist ideology*." The amount was disbursed by Ajay Rahirkar, treasurer of the group, to various other accused to procure explosives for committing unlawful activities. The conspiracy meetings were held from January 2008 at Faridabad, Bhopal, Kolkata, Bhopal, Indore and Nashik.

At a meeting in Bhopal on 11th April 2008 Col. Purohit took responsibility of providing explosives while Pragya took the task of arranging for the men for exploding the bombs in the Muslim-dominated town in North Maharashtra.

Col. Purohit had bought RDX with him when he returned from his Kashmir posting. He assembled the explosives at his residence in Pune with the help of co-accused Sudhakar Chaturvedi and wanted accused Ramji Kalsangra, and the same was used in the September 29 blast at Malegaon that killed six persons.

Pragya Singh, Maj. Upadhyay, and Col. Purohit then complained to the court of the barbaric and inhuman tortures inflicted upon her by the ATS.

Pragya Singh said "*There were five to six policemen whose job was to abuse me in filthy language. They would beat me round the clock, night and day to keep me awake. The policemen who were given the job of beating me would change because they got tired. But my beatings would not stop.*"

Pragya further said "*The ATS threatened to strip me naked and hang me upside down. They questioned me in the night, using the filthiest possible language. There were times when I was beaten up so badly, that my hands turned black.*"

Pragya Singh further accused the ATS of calling her a "*prostitute*" and linking her to a spiritual guru she considered like a father-figure in order to extract a confessional statement for the Malegaon blasts.

She told the court that she does not even know what she is being charged for "*Mujhe Maloom nahi mera kasoor kya hai*, (I don't know what my crime is)"

Major Ramesh Upadhyaya, a heart patient, said, "*I was brought before DGP AN Roy on October 28. He told me that he didn't doubt my patriotism, but if I don't confess before the ATS, they would pulverise me*"

In a choked voice, he added, "*DIG Sukhvinder Singh said that my mother must have slept with all men in my village. He said that my daughter Nidhi would be paraded naked and raped. He also threatened to plant narcotics on my son and get him jailed for 20 years*"

Col. Purohit told the court, "*The investigating officer Mohan Kulkarni and Shrivastava said that I am not a son of my father. They said that they would parade my wife naked and ensure she is raped*"

But, the ATS refuted all these charges and told the courts that the accused were telling lies in order to escape punishment.

While the proceedings were going on, Shyam Sahu's father could not bear to hear the atrocities committed upon his son by the ATS and collapsed in the courtroom after suffering a massive heart attack. He passed away.

Due to the commotion, the court proceedings were adjourned and the judicial remand was extended till 29th November.

In protest against the false implication of innocent Hindu activists by the ATS, some Hindu organizations planned a massive protest march in Mumbai on 26th November which was to be attended by over 1 lakh Hindu activists.

Fortunately, the protest was called off at the last moment after deliberations by BJP leaders.

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Chapter 17

There was another bizarre development that day. Padma Pattidaar, the wife of Dilip Pattidaar was also present in the courtroom for the hearing.

Dilip Pattidaar was a small time electrical contractor residing at at Shanti Vihar colony in Indore. He also happened to be Ramji Kalsanghra's tenant.

On 10th November 2008, two ATS officials, Rajendra Ghule and Ramesh More arrived in police uniform at the doorsteps of Dilip Pattidaar's residence.

They were accompanied by Inspector Markam of the Khajrana Police Station, Indore.

Ramesh More entered the house and told Pattidaar "*Please come along with us for a few minutes*"

A surprised Dilip Pattidaar asked More as his wife Padma watched "*But, where?*"

Rajendra Ghule said "*To the Khajrana Police Station for a routine questioning regarding your landlord Ramji Kalsanghra*"

Dilip Pattidaar turned towards his wife and said "*I'll be back soon*"

After spending a few impatient hours, Padma put her six-month old son Himanshu to sleep and went alone to the Khajrana police station, which was over six kms away from their home.

But, to her horror, the police told her that no one called Dilip Pattidaar was ever brought there. Padma was very scared and informed her family.

On 17th November, Rajendra Ghule called up Padma and informed her that he was brought to Mumbai to give a statement against Ramji Kalsanghra.

To make matters worse, on 21st November, two days before the hearing, Rajendra Ghule called Dilip's brother Swaroop asking him to send Patidar for a court hearing to Mumbai.

Swaroop informed Ghule that his brother had not come home since the day he had been taken to Mumbai by the ATS for questioning.

The entire family then rushed to Mumbai on the day of the court hearing. A worried Padma Pattidaar waited patiently to see a glimpse of her husband.

But, Dilip Pattidaar was not presented in the court along with the other accused nor presented as a witness. Padma Pattidaar tried desperately to contact the ATS but nobody entertained her.

After some months, Padma Pattidaar filed a law suit in the Madhya Pradesh High Court, Indore. She appealed to the court to probe the arrest of Pattidaar.

The ATS tried desperately to get the petition dismissed. But, their case got weak as a number of witnesses testified that they did see Rajendra Ghule and Ramesh More carrying Pattidaar in their jeep along with three others.

Gradually, it started getting clear that the two ATS officials had illegally abducted Dilip Pattidaar and taken him along with them to Mumbai.

Finally, Rajendra Ghule and Ramesh More admitted that Dilip Pattidaar was indeed brought to Mumbai for questioning but was let off the very next day after his statement was recorded.

However, Padma Pattidaar rejected this theory saying that Dilip Pattidaar never returned home. She told the court that Dilip's mobile was switched off since the last call on the night of the 17th and was never switched on again.

Pattidaar's cell phone details also showed Kala Chowki Police Station as his last location before the cellphone was switched off.

It was further found that Dilip Pattidaar was never presented before the Judicial Magistrate for recording his statement.

Padma Pattidaar feared that her husband was killed in the custody of the Maharashtra ATS. She appealed to the courts that the case should be handed over to the CBI.

The courts thus dismissed the ATS story and handed to the CBI. The CBI took statements of Rajendra Ghule and Ramesh More and arrived to a conclusion that Dilip Pattidaar was illegally abducted fron Indore by the ATS.

The closure report filed by the CBI in 2014 before the Indore court indicted Rajendra Ghule and Ramesh More with offences made out against them under Sections 120-B (conspiracy), 342 (wrongful confinement), 344 (voluntarily causing hurt), 348 (wrongful confinement to extort confession) 193 (false evidence) and 218 (public servant framing incorrect record) of the IPC.

The closure report says, *"The accused Rajendra Ghule abducted Dilip Patidar and conspired with accused Ramesh More to illegally detain him with intention to extort a confession from him. They also prepared incorrect documents with intention to save themselves from penal consequences and to use these documents in the judicial proceedings."*

The report further adds that Dilip Patidar was never arrested or produced before a magistrate in violation of the law.

The report notes that Rajendra Ghule had never spoken to the Patidar's family members ever since he had been picked up, before that day.

It says *"On that day, he* (Ghule) *knowingly called the family members to show that they had released Dilip Patidar from the ATS office. It is a clear indication of his culpable mind"*

The CBI then sought sanction from the Maharashtra Home Ministry to prosecute Rajendra Ghule and Ramesh More for the illegal abduction and mysterious disappearance of Dilip Pattidaar but, the Maharashtra Home Ministry never replied to the letter.

It was not until 2016 that things began to change for the Pattidaar family. The general elections to the Maharashtra assembly saw a change of power.

The BJP stormed to power and Devendra Phadnavis took oath as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

In July 2016, Padma Pattidaar approached Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and sought permission for granting sanction to prosecute the ATS officers responsible for Dilip Pattidaar's disappearance.

Padma wrote "*Inspite of the finding of the CBI that some ATS officers were involved in the crime of abduction, torture, disappearance of my husband, no action has been taken… The state of Maharashtra has not given sanction for prosecuting the accused mentioned in the CBI report*"

The permission was finally granted following which the Madhya Pradesh High Court issued a warrant to arrest Rajendra Ghule and Ramesh More.

Both ATS officers applied for an Interim Bail. Currently, they are out on bail.

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The firing continued non-stop for over an hour in which the attackers killed 58 people and injured 104. At 22.45 the paramilitary forces and emergency services arrived. But, by that time, the attackers had escaped to Cama Hospital near the Fort Area.

According to the ATS report, the authorities at the Cama Hospital saw the attackers arriving and locked the entrance gates.

The Maharashtra ATS chief, Hemant Karkare reached the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus to take stock of the situation. There he was informed that the attackers had fled to Cama Hospital.

Karkare immediately got into his vehicle and set off towards the Cama Hospital. He was accompanied by Vijay Saluskar, Ashok Kamte and some constables.

This information about the terror attack at the Cama Hospital given to Hemant Karkare remains a mystery till date as the officials at the Azad Maidan Police Station in the Fort Area had received no information about the attack.

As soon as the police vehicle reached in a lane next to the Cama Hospital, the attackers opened fire on the vehicle in which Hemant Karkare, Vijay Salaskar, Ashok Kamte and one more officer was killed.

It looked as though the two attackers had not gone to Cama Hospital to carry out a terror attack. In fact, they were patiently waiting outside the gate of the hospital for Karkare to arrive.

The two attackers, Mohammed Ajmal Kasab and Ismail Khan seized the police vehicle and fled from the spot. However, on the way, the front tyre deflated as it had caught a bullet during the firing.

Kasab and Khan abandoned the police vehicle and got out of it. Just then, they saw a silver color Skoda Rapid car approaching towards them.

Kasab and Khan stopped the car at gunpoint and ordered the occupants to get off the car. Then, they got into the car and sped off towards the Chowpaty Area.

According to the investigation report submitted by Raghuvanshi, the attackers travelled by sea from Karachi, Pakistan, across the Arabian Sea, hijacked the Indian fishing trawler '*Kuber*', killed the crew of four, then forced the captain to sail to Mumbai. After murdering the captain, the attackers entered Mumbai on a rubber dinghy. The captain of '*Kuber*', Amar Singh Solanki, had earlier been imprisoned for six months in a Pakistani jail for illegally fishing in Pakistani waters. The attackers stayed and were trained by the Lashkar-e-Taiba in a safe house at Azizabad near Karachi before boarding a small boat for Mumbai.

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Chapter 19

The Mumbai Terror Attacks, later called 26/11, may have been a story of the past for many Indians. But, for some, there are many questions which remain unanswered.

A fishing trawler does not carry more than 200 ltrs of Diesel which is enough only for a one way trip from Porbandar to Daman. Thus, how did the fisherman agree to ferry the terrorists to Mumbai when they themselves did not have enough fuel for the journey, leave alone the return journey back to Porbandar?

As per the ATS report, the terrorists arrived in Mumbai at 19.30 while the attack on the Taj began at 22.30. The big question which remains unanswered is that how could the terrorists carry out a terror attack of this magnitude without conducting a recce of the area?

Which clearly means that, all the terrorists were present in India months before the terror attack took place and were living somewhere in Mumbai.

Did the terrorists enter Mumbai in a rubber inflatable speedboat from the trawler or did they take the speedboat from Mumbra, considered a haven for terrorists in the past?

Who informed Hemant Karkare about the attack on Cama Hospital when the Azad Maidan Police Station in the Fort Area had no knowledge about the attack nor did anyone dial 100?

Why was the attack planned on the same day Hindu organizations had planned a massive rally to protest against the illegal arrests of their activists by the ATS?

The terrorists did not carry out any kind of attack on the Cama Hospital. They were just waiting patiently for Hemant Karkare to arrive.

Was the motive of the 26/11 attackers only to kill Hemant Karkare? If that is so, then what could be reason for doing so?

Hemant Karkare was doing a big favor on Pakistan by exonerating ISI Pakistan as a sponsor of terror and was implicating innocent Hindus in terror attacks which Pakistan based terror outfits had carried out.

Thus, why did the Pakistan based terrorists kill a person who was one of their closest allies?

The entire plot of depicting 26/11 as an act of 'Saffron Terror' fell apart due to one phone call made by Arun Jadhav to Tukaram Omble.

Thus, what would have happened if Arun Jadhav, who was pretending to be dead, was actually dead?

What would have happened if Arjun Jadhav had not called Tukaram Omble?

What would have happened if Ajmal Kasab had not been arrested alive?

Seeking answers for the above questions only makes one wonder about the motive behind the 26/11 attack.

The answer lies in these obnoxious and bizarre statements given by top leaders of the Indian National Congress following the 26/11 attacks.

On 17th December 2008, Minority Affairs Minister A.R. Antulay said that Hindutva elements may have been involved in the Mumbai attacks.

Speaking during a debate in the Parliament on the Mumbai terror attacks, Antulay said "*Superficially speaking they had no reason to kill Karkare. Whether he was a victim of terrorism or terrorism plus something, I do not know. Karkare found that there are non-Muslims involved in the acts of terrorism during his investigations in some cases. Any person going to the roots of terrorism has always been the target. Unfortunately his end came. It may be a separate inquiry how his end came. There is more than what meets the eyes*"

Antulay's outlandish comments suggested that somehow Hindutva elements were in league with the Mumbai attackers, or perhaps used the attacks as cover to kill Hemant Karkare, the man behind '*Saffron Terrorism*'.

The BJP immediately called for Antulay's resignation and protested with boisterous walkouts in parliament over the course of five days.

Antulay however refused to apologize or retract his statements and said they reflected the views of a large segment of the Muslim population.

The Congress, after first distancing itself from the comments, issued a statement two days later which implicitly endorsed the conspiracy.

However, the most bizarre and outrageous theory regarding the 26/11 attacks came in 2010.

On 6th December 2010, a book named "*26/11 : RSS Ki Saazish*" written by Aziz Burney, the Editor-in-Chief of an Urdu newspaper, Sahara, was released in Delhi by Congress General Secreatary Digvijay Singh.

The book talked about RSS leaders and Hindutva elements behind the 26/11 Mumbai Attacks.

Some of the highlights of the book were;

1. The BJP and the RSS are responsible for 26/11 attack in Mumbai. The BJP did not raise its voice against the delay in probe (p. ll)

2. ATS chief Hemant Karkare was about to disclose many facts regarding Malegaon blast in which he was expected to expose many sadhus including the BJP and the RSS (p. 28)

3. Mossad and CIA had assisted the Sangh Parivar in the attack carried out in Mumbai. With the tacit understanding of the USA, Saudi Arabia's Maulana Bedi had collected fundamentalists. Even Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi had helped in attackers' arrival and stay (p. 41)

4. Post 1993, all attacks in the country is the result of the nexus between the RSS and Mossad. Karkare was about to make all these disclosures to the media and was going to leave the country to settle abroad. Karkare was not killed by AK-47 but by the service revolver of the police. RAW and Home Ministry are investigating the role played by the Gujarat ATS in Karkare murder case. Karkare was killed by Hindutva-minded police officials and people from the Chota Rajan gang (p. 61)

5. The Congress is suspecting the involvement of the BJP in the Malegaon blast other than the RSS and Bajrang Dal. The BJP decided to give legal assistance to Sadhvi Pragya, the day Purohit told the CBI that the VHP leaders had given special contribution in formation of Abhinav Bharat. RSS leader Indresh Kumar has taken Rs 3 crore from the Pakistan intelligence agency ISI. The same day Karkare received the threat call and the very next day he was killed (p. 99)

6. The RSS and Israel are trying to make India unstable (p. 190) (again Israel)

7. In order to make India a Hindu nation, such blasts are being carried out (p. 219)

8. Abhinav Bharat was getting financial aid from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Weapons were bought from the money provided by Praveen Togadia to kill Indresh Kumar (p. 232)

9. While the RSS is distributing Trishuls to youths and women, the Bajrang Dal is providing training to people for making bombs and carrying out blasts. The VHP had planted bombs in several mosques in Maharashtra to explode them (p. 584)

10. The RSS and VHP are trying to defame Muslims by forming terrorist organizations like Indian Mujahideen and Islamic Security Force. : Indian Mujahideen was not involved in the bomb blasts in Assam. Bajrang Dal is a dubious organization and Indian Mujahideen is the code name of it. Editor of Communalism Combat Teesta Setalvad mentioned in a report that the CBI is trying cover up Hindu Terrorism and Batla encounter was fake (p. 597)

11. Election Commission of India must consider banning the BJP to contest elections. From Nathuram Godse to Sadhvi Pragya, violence is part of the RSS culture. About 100 Hindutva Organisations

associated with the RSS are involved in the violent activities. Mentality of the police and the army in the country is anti-Muslim (p. 606)

Speaking at the launch event, Digvijay Singh spoke "*On November 26, 2008, at 7 pm, just about two hours before the attacks in Mumbai started, Hemant Karkare, the slain ATS chief rang me on my mobile and told me how his family and his life were blighted by constant threats from people annoyed by his investigations into the Malegaon blasts. Woh pareshaan the (he was worried), and he told me he was trying to trace the calls, but was depressed and worried by threats and personal attacks made in their newspapers. Karkare also told me that he was hurt that in a paper, the mouthpiece of a Hindu right-wing organization, allegations were being made that my son was minting money in Dubai, when in reality he was only a school student in Mumbai. I was so shocked and demoralized on being told of his death in the attacks in Mumbai late at night on November 26, that my initial reaction was, 'Oh God, they have killed him*"

This book raised a lot of suspicion as it never looked like a well researched theory but a mouthpiece of the Maharashtra ATS.

This book also contained a lot of data that seemed to be lifted from the statement of Capt. Nitin Joshi. Thus, it won't be illogical to ask a question whether this book was written two years after 26/11 or before the 26/11 Mumbai attacks along with Capt. Joshi false statement..

During the interrogation following his arrest, Ajmal Kasab, the lone terrorist captured alive, confessed that the Mumbai attacks were planned by Hafiz Sayeed, the founder of the Lashkar e Taiba and his associate Mohammed Lakhvi. Kasab further said that the attack was aided by Pakistan's ISI.

But, Pakistan vehemently denied the charge. On 15th February 2009, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that the 2007 Samjhauta bombings and the Mumbai attacks were linked.

But, a few days later, Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik publicly admitted that the conspiracy did take place in Pakistan. Finally, the Islamic apologists in India had no choice but to retract from their mythical theory.

However, one big question does come to mind. Why would the Interior Minister of Pakistan publicly admit his country's involvement in acts of terror?

Was Rehman Malik trying to safeguard someone's interest by his admission?

Over eight years have passed since the biggest terror attack on Indian soil took place. Life in the financial capital of India has returned back to normal.

But, the Indian Government has not shown any political resolve to implicate the people named as perpetrators of this dastardly terror attack.

The trial is going on in Pakistan for over six years but, India has not shown any interest in securing the conviction of the perpetrators of 26/11.

Hafeez Sayed, the alleged mastermind of the 26/11 attack continues to carry out terror attacks on India.

Thus, looking back at the sequence of events that led to 26/11 and the followup, one will not be wrong in assuming that the 26/11 attack was not a Pakistan sponsored terror attack but, a meticulously orchestrated plan by.....

"THE INVISIBLE 'HAND' BEHIND SAFFRON TERRORISM"

.....whose only motive was to show 26/11 as an act of *'Saffron Terrorism'*

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Chapter 20

Following the Mumbai Terror Attacks, the '*Saffron Terror*' case was postponed as the ATS was given time to investigate the terror attack.

In the first week of December, Col. Purohit was admitted to the INS Ashwini Military Hospital in Mumbai as his knee injury worsened.

The doctors at the hospital medically examined Col. Purohit and confirmed that the nerves of both his hands were damaged, his right knee, where he had undergone a reconstruction, has been damaged again due to the tortures inflicted upon him by the ATS.

Thus, Col. Purohit had to undergo another surgery on his knee joint as a result of this. It was indeed a national shame that the army officer, who had undergone knee reconstruction surgery due to an injury fighting terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir, had to face this entire trauma only due to a sinister conspiracy hatched by the ATS under Hemant Karkare.

After a two month long delay, following the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, the '*Saffron Terror*' case was finally back on track.

On 22nd January 2009, the ATS submitted the 4,000-page charge sheet in the specially constituted Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court of Justice Puranik in Mumbai.

The MCOCA court admitted the charge sheet and sent all the accused to the Byculla Central Jail.

A month later, on 28th February 2009, the MCOCA court dropped charges against Col. Purohit in the fake arms possession case as the ATS failed to file a charge sheet within the stipulated time.

This was a clear proof that the fake arms possession case against Col. Purohit was only a hoax by the ATS in order to secure his arrest.

After securing Col. Purohit's arrest, the Mumbai ATS tortured him and obtained his confession as a conspirator in the Malegaon blast.

Col. Purohit was now charged under MCOCA for his involvement in the Malegaon and the Samjhauta Express blast.

A week later, on 8th March 2009, Pragya Singh Thakur was hospitalized for unknown reasons. The ATS later told the press that she was suffering from indigestion because of the low quality of jail food.

However, nobody knew the real truth. Some days later, the jail authorities admitted that raw eggs were mixed in the boiled cabbage served to Pragya Singh with the sole purpose of humiliating her.

Pragya Thakur returned to the Byculla Jail in two weeks' time but refused to eat non-vegetarian food that was served to her.

On 29th March 2009, an attempt to suicide case was registered against Pragya Thakur for not eating the non-veg food served to her in the Byculla jail.

After intervention by some right wing organizations, she was finally served vegetarian food.

On 12th April 2009, elections were held for the Indian Parliament in which the Congress retained power.

The main reason for the Congress victory was the '*Saffron Terror*' case as the Congress swept almost every Muslim dominated area.

After returning back to power their arrogance knew no bounds as they began pursuing the '*Saffron Terror*' case with renewed vigor.

On 22nd April 2009, Pragya Singh was assaulted in the Byculla Jail by a fellow inmate, Mumtaz Sheikh, who was also serving imprisonment under MCOCA.

Pragya Singh was rushed to the JJ Hospital in Mumbai for treatment. It was later understood that Mumtaz Sheikh had assaulted Pragya Thakur on the instructions of the ATS.

Pragya Singh complained to the jail Superintendent on 15th April about the misconduct of Mumtaz Shaikh but he ignored her complaint.

A month later, Ajmal Kasab, the terrorist captured in the Mumbai arracks, was also admitted to the same hospital for a minor eye infection.

The Maharashtra ATS, took Kasab's eye infection more seriously than Pragya Singh's grievous injuries and instructed the hospital authorities to vacate the bed in order to admit Kasab.

The ATS justified their actions saying that treating both the high profile prisoners at the same time at the hospital may put too much pressure on the security forces.

Naveen Chomal, Pragya Singh's lawyer, told the press that she was moved to the hospital immediately for treatment on the orders of Special Judge M P Puranik.

Chomal further said *"She has been complaining of severe back pain over the past few weeks. However, the jail authorities have deferred moving her to J J Hospital on the pretext that there are no guards to escort her"*

Pragya Singh was transferred back to the jail in an injured condition just to make way for a Pakistani terrorist.

After Pragya Singh was shifted to the Byculla Jail, the ophthalmology department near the prisoners' ward of the JJ Hospital was readied for Kasab's treatment.

In the end, Kasab's minor eye infection had cost the Indian taxpayer over Rs.20 million thus making him making him India's costliest prisoner till date.

In a letter dated 11th July 2009, Pragya Singh threatened to kill herself alleging ill-treatment meted to her in the Byculla Jail.

She alleged that despite her ill-health, she was taken to the J J hospital in a police jeep instead of an ambulance.

Pragya Singh further stated "*It is strange that a terrorist like Mohammad Ajmal Kasab is being given VIP treatment in jail while I am being punished for my Hindutva ideology*"

In another instance, in early 2010, Pragya Singh was admitted to the Ayurveda Seva Sangh Hospital in Nasik.

The ATS told the media that she had suffered a mild heart attack.

But, the truth was that her spine was severely damaged as a result of barbaric tortures inflicted upon her by the officers of the Maharashtra ATS.

Due to this spine damage, the lower half of Pragya Singh's body would eventually be paralysed for life.

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Chapter 21

Meanwhile, in a strange development, the American FBI arrested a person called David Coleman Headley and Tahawwur Hussain Rana for their alleged links with various Islamic groups like HuJI and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

During the interrogation Headley confessed that Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists carried out, not only the Mumbai attack but also the Samjhauta blasts, Ajmer blasts and Makka Masjid blasts, under the guidance of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

Headley further stated that the ISI was actively engaged with the Lashkar commanders responsible for the Mumbai attacks at '*every stage of the plot*'.

Headley also mentioned that Major Sameer Ali, Major Iqbal and Major Haroon Ashique, who are serving officers of the Pakistan Army, collaborated with the LeT in planning the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

David Headley further told the FBI that Ishrat Jahan, the terrorist killed by the Gujrat Police, was a "*Fidayeen*" (sacrificial aspirant) working for a person named Muzammil Bhat or Muzammil Butt.

On 20th July 2009, a luncheon was hosted by Prime Minister of India at his residence in July 2009 in honor of visiting US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress.

At the luncheon, Congress leader, Rahul Gandhi told US Ambassador Timothy Roemer that the growth of "*radicalised Hindu groups which create religious tensions in India could pose a bigger threat to the country than activities of groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT)".

According to a secret US diplomatic cable from New Delhi released by Wiki-Leaks dated 3rd August 2009, the Congress leader shared his views with Roemer on a range of political topics, social challenges.

The cable contained details of Rahul's conversation with the envoy at a luncheon hosted by the Indian Prime Minister.

The cable said "*Responding to the ambassador's query about Lashkar-e-Taiba's activities in the region and immediate threat to India, Rahul said there was evidence of some support for the group among certain elements in India's indigenous Muslim community. However, Rahul warned, the bigger threat may be the growth of radicalised Hindu groups, which create religious tensions and political confrontations with the Muslim community*".

The cable also noted that the Congress general secretary was referring to the tensions created by some of the more polarising figures in the BJP such as Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi.

The cable signed off by Roemer says that Gandhi, who was seated next to the ambassador, was forthright in describing the challenges faced by the Congress party and the UPA government in the months ahead.

In the cable, Rahul Gandhi is said to have remarked "*The risk of a 'home-grown' extremist front, reacting to terror attacks coming from Pakistan or from Islamist groups in India, was a growing concern and one that demanded constant attention*"

In response to this expose, Panchjanya, a weekly newspaper published by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Hindi said "*Rahul Gandhi is totally unaware of the history of Hindutva as well as the concept of nationalism*"

On 8th August 2010, the United States department of state issued a statement which contradicted the Indian probe suspecting links of Hindu organizations in the Malegaon, Samjhauta Express, and the Ajmer Sharif blasts.

Contrary to the Indian government's estimate that Hindu extremists carried out the blasts, the United States held the Pakistan-based Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami (HuJI) and its commander Ilyas Kashmiri responsible for the attacks.

The US banned the HuJI and the LeT and declared them as terrorist outfits. It also requested the Indian authorities to review their mythical "*Saffron Terror*" theory thereby opening a can of worms.

In its statement, the US state department stated "*These actions were taken in consultation with the department of the treasury and the department of justice.... These actions will give US law enforcement additional tools needed to restrict the flow of resources to HuJI and Mohammad Ilyas Kashmiri.*"

Thereafter, the US state department identified a Pakistani national named Asif Kasmani, of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, as the mastermind of the Samjhauta Express blast, and moved the UN to declare him as an international terrorist.

The US state department also said that the Lashkar e Taiba commander, Muzammil also may be involved in the Malegaon 2006 and Samjhauta blasts.

The same day, the United Nations too imposed sanctions on both HuJI and Ilyas Kashmiri, subjecting both the entity and the individual to "*the assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo*".

The resolution [No 1267] of the Committee on Sanctions of the United Nations Security Council [UNSC] dated 29.6.2009 declared "*Qasmani Arif, chief coordinator of the relations of LeT with other organizations, has worked with LeT to facilitate terrorist attacks including, the bombing of February 2007 in the Samjhauta Express in Panipat*"

Adding that Qasmani was funded by Dawood Ibrahim and he did fund-raising for LeT and Al-Qaida, the UNSC said "*In exchange for their support, Al-Qaida provided support staff for the bombing in February 2007 in the Samjhauta Express in Panipat*"

The UN, in fact, termed the Samjhauta Express blast a joint operation of HuJI and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

In The Washington Post issue dated 5.11.2010, Sebastian Rotella, a US journalist, wrote in his report that Faiza Outalha, the third of wife of David Coleman Headley had confessed that Headley was involved in Samjhauta blast.

Sebastian Rotella wrote *"She said Headley had been given a special mission and that he had both U.S. and Pakistani passports. She said she felt she had been innocently used in an express train bombing in India that had killed 68 people in 2007"*

Following the revelations by US and the UN, Bahukutumbi Raman, an Additional Secretary of the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of India, wrote an article in 'The Outlook'

The article stated *"...according to American investigators, the LeT was responsible for the Samjauta Express blast and the HuJI for the Mecca Masjid blast"*

"If the American investigators, who have better sources in Pakistan, are correct, how can our investigators claim that some arrested Hindus were responsible for these incidents?"

"Justice and fair play demand a thorough investigation into the two different versions that have emerged from Indian and American investigators"

"While the American investigators have blamed the LET and the HuJI, Indian investigators have blamed the Abhinav Bharat. Both cannot be correct."

Though the American disclosures raised many eyebrows, the Indian government dismissed the solid evidences presented by the US state department and stuck to their mythical *'Saffron Terror'* theory as it suited their political interests.

The Indian authorities may have brushed aside the US claims but, one alarming revelation came up during these disclosures.

During the course of the interrogation following the Malegaon 2006 blasts, the arrested suspects had named a person called Muzammil as the mastermind of the blasts.

These Muslim suspects were eventually acquitted by the Indian court in 2010 and the blame of the Malegaon 2006 blasts was put on Saffron organizations.

Thus, one question should be answered. How did Muzammil's name come up during interrogations if the suspects were indeed innocent?

It certainly could not have come accidentally while surfing on '*Google Search*'.

Six months after the UN and the US announced sanctions against LeT and Qasmani, the Pakistan Interior Minister Rehman Mallik said "*some Pakistan-based Islamists had been hired by Lt Col Purohit to carry out the Samjhauta Express attack*"

The big question is ..... Was Pakistan dictating terms to Indian investigators regarding the Samjhauta probe?

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Chapter 22

On 31st July 2009, the special MCOCA court, in a landmark judgement, dropped charges of MCOCA on all the 11 accused on the ground that "*at the time of taking cognisance in the Malegaon case, cognisance of the chargesheets in the other blast cases had not been taken*".

The main reason behind Justice Y D Shinde's ruling was that the prosecution had failed to prove that all the accused were members of a single organised crime syndicate.

This meant that the accused would no longer have to face trial under that strict anti-terror law and the case would also be sent back to a regular court in Nashik which meant the accused could now avail bail.

The prosecution in the case too suffered a major roadblock as they could no longer rely upon the confessions of the accused obtained by force as sole evidences. The next hearing was slated for 8th September 2009.

BJP spokesperson Rajiv Pratap Rudy, commenting on the verdict said "*We welcome the dropping of charges under MCOCA against Malegaon blast accused by the Mumbai special court. With this the diversionary and fictional myth about Hindu terror has been smashed.... It has been proven false. The case will now be tried in an ordinary court. The MCOCA charges were dropped on two grounds. One, that the accused were not a part of any organised crime syndicate. Secondly, there was no prior chargesheet against them*"

On 24th August 2009, the Maharashtra Government issued a press release stating that the verdict was '*unconstitutional and bad in law*'.

A day later, the prosecution filed an appeal against the verdict in the Bombay High Court seeking a stay order on the MCOCA court ruling and asked for more time to gather evidences.

On 8th September 2009, in a strange judgment, the Bombay High Court stayed the verdict of the lower court and gave the ATS more time to gather evidences.

The next hearing in this case was to be held a year later. Surprisingly, the court refused bail to the accused during this period.

Within days of the Bombay High court stay order on the lower court verdict, Captain Nitin Joshi and Shyam Apte backtracked on their statements.

This was a major blow to the prosecution which was relying solely on these confession statements. Thus, they now had to resort to a new plan of action.

On 29th April 2010, the Rajasthan ATS arrested a person called Devendra Gupta, an active member of the RSS and a resident of Bihari Ganj in Ajmer, in connection with the 2007 Ajmer Dargah bomb blast case.

Devendra Gupta was staying in Jharkhand and had come to Ajmer to meet his ailing mother when officials of the Rajasthan ATS arrested him.

The Rajasthan ATS said that the SIM card that was used to trigger the blasts in Ajmer was registered in his name. Gupta was produced before the Ajmer Chief Judicial Magistrate, who remanded him to 12-day police custody.

On 1st May 2010, Rajasthan home minister Shanti Dhariwal said in a press conference *"Investigating agencies have gathered enough evidence to prove that the arrested person also had links with the RSS. He has given vital information and will be taken to dargah sharif for spot verifications soon"*

A day later, the Rajasthan ATS arrested another person named Chandrashekhar Lave a native of Shajapur, Madhya Pradesh.

During the course of his interrogation, the Rajasthan ATS discovered that both, Gupta and Chandrashekhar had close ties with Sunil Joshi and a Hindu god man named Swami Aseemanand.

The Rajasthan ATS then extracted a confession from the two in which they allegedly confessed that Aseemanand and Joshi had brought them into their fold and persuaded them to carry out the attacks on Ajmer Sharif and Mecca Masjid.

In the days to follow, the Rajasthan ATS arrested another person named Lokesh Sharma, an employee of an IT firm in Noida.

On 16th July 2010, a TV channel named Headlines Today claimed that it had conducted a sting operation on RSS leaders in which they had allegedly hatched a plot to assassinate Vice President Hamid Ansari.

The next day, hundreds of RSS activists barged into the Headlines Today office in New Delhi broke glass panes and vandalized the lobby.

That evening, the entire media was buzzing with activity condemning the attack on the media house. Their sympathizers pitched in with elaborate denunciation of "goons" and "hooligans".

The editor of Headlines Today was screaming loud "*This is an attack on freedom of expression. The media is being muzzled. Ideas must be combatted with ideas, not violence. It is despicable and deplorable*"

Eventually, when the truth came out a few months later, it was proved that the tapes aired on that TV channel were doctored.

On 19th July 2010, the Bombay High Court set aside the lower court verdict and restored MCOCA charges on all the accused, holding that cognisance of the offences had been taken by trial courts before the Malegaon chargesheet came up.

In its verdict, the Bombay High Court said "*As is the settled legal position, cognisance is taken of an offence and not of an offender. Hence, the leaned special judge was not right in holding that the competent court was required to take cognisance of offences against respondent 7* (Dhawad)".

Chapter 23

On 4th October 2010, the case came up for hearing in the Supreme Court. The case was adjudicated by Justice Markendeya Katju, a proven Hindu hater.

He admitted the appeal of the accused but declined to grant bail to them saying "*It is a grievous offence. Many people were killed. The trial is still on*".

On 23rd October 2010, the Rajasthan ATS filed an 806-page charge sheet in the Ajmer blast case against Devendra Gupta, Lokesh Sharma and Chandrashekhar Lave.

Two others, Sandeep Dange and Ramji Kalsanghra could never be traced and were later declared as absconders. They were all charged with murder and defiling a place of worship.

The charge sheet was filed by Rajasthan ATS officer Satyendra Singh in the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Jagendra Kumar Jain.

The ATS charge sheet stated that these five accused had planned and executed the Ajmer Dargah attack along with Sunil Joshi, who was murdered in 2007.

It said that a person named Swami Aseemanand, whose real name is Jatin Chatterjee, a native of Hooghly district in West Bengal was the mastermind of the attack.

The ATS also named Pragya Thakur as a co-conspirator in the blasts.

The ATS charge sheet further stated that RSS leader Indresh Kumar was present at a secret meeting held in a Gujarati guest house in Jaipur on October 31, 2005.

Six other RSS functionaries were also said to be present at the meeting. ATS sources said that Mr Kumar has not been listed as accused as further investigation is underway to ascertain whether he had any links with the blast.

Refuting any involvement in the blast, Indresh Kumar said, "*It is a political conspiracy against me. Investigating agencies have been misused. The present government protects the traitors and wages a war against patriots. I will fight this injustice in court*".

The ATS would confess later that the name of the RSS leader was included in the charge sheet only because of the expose by the TV channel, Headlines Today.

On 19th November 2010, the Rajasthan ATS arrested Swami Aseemanand from his ashram at Haridwar in Uttarakhand.

A month later, a news magazine, Tehelka, considered to be a mouthpiece of the Congress, reported that Aseemanand had requested the District Magistrate to record his confession about his involvement in a string of terror attacks.

In his confession, Aseemanand was allegedly said to have stated "*I know I can be sentenced to the death penalty but I still want to make the confession*

Aseemanand further stated that he was making the confession without any fear, force, coercion or inducement.

The magazine further claimed that, in a letter written by Aseemanand two days after his confession, he is said to have explained his change of heart after meeting a Muslim boy called Kaleem who aroused his conscience and inspired him to confess to the crimes.

In his 42-page confession, recorded in Hindi, and reported in Tehelka news magazine's latest cover story "*In the Words of a Zealot*",

Aseemanand allegedly explained to the magistrate about the "*involvement of a few Hindutva leaders, including himself, in planning and executing a series of terror attacks.*"

He allegedly named senior RSS leader Indresh Kumar, the murdered RSS pracharak Sunil Joshi, Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur and senior RSS pracharaks Sandeep Dange and Ramji Kalsangra, among others, as being key conspirators in the terror blast.

According to Tehelka, Aseemanand was said to have confessed in his statement, "*I told everybody that bomb ka jawab bomb se dena chahiye* (we should reply to bomb blasts with bombs) *I told everyone since 80 per cent of Malegaon are Muslims, we should explode the bomb in Malegaon.*"

He also said, "*Since Hindus throng to the Ajmer Sharif dargah, we thought a bomb blast in Ajmer would deter Hindus from going there.*"

The confession further states "*A meeting that took place, in July 2005. After an RSS conclave in Surat, senior Sangh leaders including Bhagwat and Indresh Kumar, who is now on the organisation's powerful seven-member national executive council, travelled to a temple in the Dangs, Gujarat, where I was living—a two-hour drive. In a tent pitched by a river several kilometres away from the temple, Bhagwat and Kumar met me and my accomplice Sunil Joshi. Joshi informed Bhagwat of a plan to bomb several Muslim targets around India*"

Aseemanand further said that both RSS leaders approved his plan, and Bhagwat told him, "*You can work on this with Sunil. We will not be involved, but if you are doing this, you can consider us to be with you*"

Aseemanand further stated "*Then they told me, 'Swamiji, if you do this we will be at ease with it. Nothing wrong will happen then. It will not be criminalised. If you do it, then people won't say that we did a crime for the sake of committing a crime. It will be connected to the ideology. This is very important for Hindus. Please do this. You have our blessings*"

Aseemanand was further said to have claimed "*Gujrat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi approached him at a senior RSS gathering in Ahmedabad, and told him, 'I know what Keshubhai is doing to you. Swamiji*

there is no comparison to what you are doing. You are doing the real work. Now it has been decided that I will be the CM. Let me come and then I will do your work. Rest easy"

According to Tehelka magazine, Rajasthan Police claimed that Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad was chosen because the Nizam of Hyderabad had wanted to opt for Pakistan during Partition.

And Samjhauta Express was chosen because it was mostly used by Pakistanis. The magazine further said that Swami Aseemanand told the magistrate that in a 2006 meeting with other Hindu radicals, including murdered RSS pracharak Sunil Joshi and Thakur Pragya Singh, it was he who propagated the policy of "*bomb for a bomb*".

Sunil Joshi, alleged to be the key conspirator in the Ajmer dargah blast, was shot dead in Madhya Pradesh in 2007 by his own men on the orders of Pragya Thakur to cover up the terror act.

During the investigations carried out by the Madhya Pradesh Police in 2008, they had found that Sunil Joshi was murdered due to a money dispute with a colleague.

But, for some strange reasons, the Rajasthan ATS dismissed the investigation report of the Madhya Pradesh Police and accepted Aseemanand's confession as the gospel truth.

Aseemanand's alleged confession raised many eyebrows as it came on the eve of Foreign Secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan in Thimphu, Pakistan which were to be held in January 2011.

A few days before Aseemanand's alleged confession, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, came out with a provocative statement saying that India's handling of the Samjhauta Express train bombing case showed that it lacked "*courage to unearth culpability of Hindu extremists*".

The Indian investigations had hit a roadblock following the revelations by the US department of state. Further, after the testimony of Capt. Nitin Joshi before the MSHRC, the ATS were on a losing ground.

Thus, the suspicious timing of Aseemanand's arrest on the backdrop of US revelations and back-tracking of key witnesses like Capt. Nitin Joshi followed by such statements from Pakistani Foreign Minis-

Chapter 24

On 5th January 2011, Pragya Thakur's brother, Ananth Brahmachari attempted suicide in south-east Delhi today alleging that he was "*harassed*" by investigating agencies.

A note was recovered from him in which, he alleged that he was "*depressed*" due to questioning by the investigating agencies in connection with his sister's alleged association in terrorist acts.

On 26th February 2011, based on Aseemanand's confession statement, Pragya Singh was placed under arrest by Madhya Pradesh Police in connection with the murder of Sunil Joshi.

The Special Public Prosecutor, Rohini Salian told the media "*The Madhya Pradesh police moved an application in the special MCOCA court in Mumbai, and after taking the court's permission they placed Sadhvi under arrest in the Sunil Joshi murder case.*"

On 6th April 2011, the government of India issued a notification stating that the 2008 Malegaon blast case Malegaon blast case would be handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), an agency formed in December 2008 after the Mumbai attacks to for investigating terror-related cases in India.

According to the additional director general of police and the new ATS chief Rakesh Maria "*The NIA is also ready looking into the Samjhauta blast case and is in touch with the CBI, which is looking into the Mecca Masjid, Ajmer Sharif and 2006 Malegaon blasts cases. Basically, the NIA is investigating the role of Hindu radicals in the country. This is why we believe the case was handed over to it for further investigations.*"

On 12th May 2011, in a strange development, Aseemamand backtracked from his statement claiming that it was obtained "*under duress*".

In late 2011, Aseemanand wrote a petition to the President of India describing torture meted out to him during his confinement.

The High Courts took cognigance of this matter and issued a notice to the NIA to investigate the allegations of torture. However, no action was ever taken in this regard.

This disclosure came as a huge setback for the investigators as it had no evidences to back the confessions of the accused which were obtained by force.

On 3rd August 2011, the Bombay High Court granted bail to Shiv Narayan Kalsangraha, Ajay Rahirkar, Jagdish Mahatre and Shyam Sahu on a surety of Rs. 1 lakh each as *'there was no material to connect them to the blast'*.

The presiding judge of the Bombay High Court, Justice AM Thipsay remarked *"There is no sufficient material to show prima facie involvement of accused in the blast case. They have not taken any active part in the blast conspiracy. The only link of these accused to the blast case is that they knew the prime accused Ramchandra Kalsangra, who is yet to be arrested."*

The court further observed that though they were aware about Ramchandra's involvement in unlawful activities and about his strong philosophy for Hindutva, it is not sufficient to accuse them of being part of the conspiracy.

Justice Thipsay further said *"The NIA, which has taken over the probe recently from the State Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS), has been unable to point out specific evidence against the accused and are claiming that the probe is still on. The trial is not yet started in the case in such circumstances the accused is not required to languish in jail."*

It is ironic and disgraceful that the highly learned judiciary of India took three years to discover that there was no evidence to implicate Shyam Sahu, Shiv Narayan Kalsangraha, Jagdish Mahatre and Ajay Rahirkar.

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Chapter 25

During this period, the same tactics of torture used by the Maharashtra ATS were used by the NIA against the accused but, in a disguised form.

On 27th October 2011, Pragya Thakur was manhandled by African drug peddlers lodged in the Byculla Jail. According to Pragya Thakur's lawyer Ganesh Sovani;

"It was during her brother-in-law's visit to the prison, when she informed us about the incident of manhandling of her cellmate, Rita Jaiswal, by these women"

"The undertrials had gheraoed them, misbehaved with them and also manhandled Jaiswal. The offenders repeatedly abused, heckled, intimated and provoked them"

Further he said "When the matter was reported to the jail authorities, even they could not overpower these African female inmates due to their strong physique"

"If the jail authorities send police personnel then these African female undertrials try to undress themselves and start shouting and screaming"

"Thus we want to put forth our contention before the special MCOCA court and ensure that no untoward incident will happen to her".

On 18th November 2011, Pragya Thakur moved to a Mumbai Special Court seeking bail on *"grounds of parity"*

In her bail plea, Pragya Thakur contended that no *'specific role'* had been attributed in the terror case nor anything *'incriminating'* had been recovered from her.

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Chapter 26

Following Swami Aseemanand's backtracking from his confession statement the '*Saffron Terror*' case fell flat on its back.

The National investigation Agency (NIA) now had no evidence to back the case apart from the confession statements of the accused.

In October 2011, the NIA approached the Bombay High Court and sought police custody of all the accused to start the investigations afresh.

By December 2011, the NIA filed a chargesheet against fourteen accused which included Pragya Singh Thakur, Major Ramesh Upadhyay, Lt Col Prasad Purohit, Sameer Kulkarni, Rakesh Dhawade, Sudhakar Dwivedi aka Dayanand Pandey, Sudhakar Chaturvedi, Pravin Takalki, Shivnarayan Kalsangra, Shyam Sahu, Ajay Rahirkar, Jagdish Mhatre.

Two accused, Ramji Kalsanghra and Sandeep Dange were declared absconders.

To everyones utter dismay, the NIA charge sheet was based solely on Aseemanand's alleged confession to the media (Tehelka) despite the godman stating that he had given the confession under duress.

The NIA not only booked the accused for the Malegaon 2008 and Samjhauta blasts, but also the Ajmer Sharif blasts, Mecca Masjid blasts and even the Malegaon 2006 blasts.

The NIA framed murder charges against seven persons, including key accused Aseemanand, in the Ajmer Dargah blast case.

Devendra Gupta, Lokesh Sharma, Chandrashekhar Leve, Bharat Mohan Rateshwar, Jarshad Bhai and Mukesh Wasani were charged under sections 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder) of IPC.

The 4,000-page chargesheet had alleged that Malegaon was picked as the blast target since Muslims form a sizeable part of its population.

The NIA charge sheet named Pragya Thakur, Purohit and another accused Swami Dayanand Pandey as the key conspirators in the Malegaon blasts.

NIA in its charge sheet claimed "*Before this case was handed over to NIA, Swami Aseemanand had made a confession in the Mecca Masjid blast case that one Sunil Joshi (who was dead) had told him that the blast in Malegaon was the handiwork of his boys*"

"In his confessional statements, Swami Aseemanand had said that a meeting was held in June 2006 at the house of one Bharat Rateshwar in Valsad in which he (Aseemanand) had suggested that Malegaon, which has 86% Muslims, be chosen as the site for the first bomb blast. He also said that Sunil Joshi had told him that during 2006 Diwali his men had exploded bombs in Malegaon"

The chargesheet had further alleged that it was Pandey who had instructed Purohit to arrange RDX for the 2006 blasts, while Pragya owned the motorcycle used in the 2008 blast.

Ajay Rahirkar, another accused, allegedly organised funds for the terror act while conspiracy meetings were held at Bhonsala Military School in Nasik.

Rakesh Dhawde, Ramesh Upadhyay, Shyamlal Sahu, Shivnarain Kalsangra, Sudhakar Chaturvedi, Jagdish Mhatre and Sameer Kulkarni were the other seven accused.

To back Aseemanand's statement, the confession of another key witness Yashpal Bhadana, a member of Abhinav Bharat, was recorded before a magistrate under Section 164 CrPC in connection with the Malegaon 2006 case.

This was an outrageous act by India's premier anti-terror investigating agency which had accepted a false statement as the gospel truth and ignored the valuable inputs provided by the American FBI based on credible evidences.

This act by the NIA raises several questions;

Why did the NIA not name Arif Qasmani as suspect/accused in the Samjhauta blast?

Why it did not seek the extradition of Arif Qasmani from Pakistan?

What effort did the NIA make to secure the evidence on the basis of which the UNSC had declared Arif Qasmani as the accused in the Samjhauta blast?

What effort did it make to secure the evidence on the basis of which the US Treasury Department had declared Arif Qasmani as the perpetrator?

Did the NIA write to the Ministry of External Affairs or the Interpol directly for assistance from the US and the UN in the above?

Whether it asked the MEA to seek the co-operation of the group established between India and Pakistan for sharing of the information?

It was shocking to see two people charged for the same offence. While the American Federal Judge sentenced David Coleman Headley for 35 years imprisonment for his role in the 26/11, Malegaon 2006 and the Samjhauta Express blasts, the NIA had charge sheeted 14 people in the same offence without any credible evidence.

Following the charge sheet against the '*Saffron Terror*' suspects, the seven Muslim accused in the Malegaon 2006 blasts were let off by the NIA.

The NIA did not object to the bail applications of seven accused in the 2006 Malegaon blasts case due to which, they were released on bail.

The NIA told the court that the confession of the 2007 Mecca Masjid bomb blast accused, Swami Aseemanand, had led them to review the evidence collected by the previous investigating agencies, namely the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad and the Central Bureau of Investigation and reach a conclusion that the seven accused were not guilty.

A bench headed by Justice F M I Kalifulla said there was no reliable material to "*prima facie*" show that they along with four others were "*criminally liable under the provisions of the MCOCA*"

The Supreme Court further said that the trial court should decide their bail plea on merits and without applicability of MCOCA, preferably within one month.

In order to ensure a "*speedy trial*" in the matter, the bench of Judges also requested the Bombay High Court to "*designate a special court for the trial and make certain that the trial begins at the earliest and is concluded expeditiously*"

This verdict of the Supreme Court may have come as a huge relief for the people accused in the '*Saffron Terror*' case. However, it raises several questions on the wisdom of the Indian Judiciary as it was the same verdict that the lower court had delivered way back in Feb 2009 that was later set aside by the Bombay High Court.

Thus, one may ask a logical question to the Indian Judiciary and that is "*How did it take six years for a learned judge to revert back to the lower court verdict?*"

Even after the MCOCA charges against the '*Saffron Terror*' accused were dropped, the bunch of left-ist did not stop their Islamic Sychophancy.

Soon after the verdict, former Special Prosecutor Rohini Salian, who was heading the prosecution for the NIA during the Congress regime, alleged that she was asked to "*go soft*" against the accused in the 2008 Malegaon blasts case after the BJP came to power.

Salian threatened to file contempt proceedings against the NIA for "*tending to hamper the judicial process,*" resulting in "*weakening of the prosecution's case*"

In an interview to The Indian Express, published on June 25, Salian said "*I reiterate and affirm that whatever I have stated in my interview to the newspaper Indian Express... is true and correct and I reiterate the same as it is specifically stated therein*"

If one was to take Rohini Salian seriously, she needs to be asked one question;

"If Rohini Salian attributes the cause of failure, to indict the Saffron Terror accused to the BJP government, why didn't the NIA manage to gather evidence against the accused since December 2011 when she was the Public Prosecutor and the NIA was very much under the Congress regime. Why these double standards, Ms. Salian?"

Anytime a devastating terror attack takes place and the perpetrators of the attack are nabbed by law enforcement agencies with credible evidence, '*Human Rights*' activists demand that these perpetrators should also be treated with respect and dignity.

But as far as the illegal detention and torture of innocent Hindu activists, Saints and a Military Officer is concerned, these activists suddenly lose their voice.

No one should transgress the law of the land, and so it should be clarified that if there is even an iota of truth in the charges against any of these accused, he should face the consequences.

But so far, have the investigators found evidence to prove that the '*Saffron Terror*' accused were involved in any kind of terror activities?

One can't help but see the parallels of this case with the infamous Dreyfus Affair of late nineteenth century France when a patriotic French Captain Alfred Dreyfus was wrongfully accused of treason and punished till, one day, the truth of his innocence emerged.

Back then, the French intellectuals accused their government of indulging in anti-semitism (Dreyfus was a Jew).

Using that parallel, when many national leaders and media persons are painting these innocent people as 'Terrorists', isn't it a case of 'Anti-Hinduism' merely to woo a section of the Indian populace?

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Conclusion

The '*Saffron Terror*' case is by far one of the most unheard phenomenons in world history. Today, India is one of the biggest victims of Islamic terrorism. It features among the six countries most affected by Islamic terrorism.

Yet, it is often said in India "*Terrorism has no religion*". However, this philosophy applies as long as the terrorist is a Muslim. But, the terrorist suddenly becomes a Muslim when he is hanged till death or shot dead by security forces.

Thousands of Leftist Seculars gather to shed crocodile tears and condemn the death of the terrorist and claim that the terrorist was a victim of a racist mindset.

Yet, these very Leftist Seculars, who cry and shout repeatedly "*Terrorism has NO caste, NO colour and NO religion*", find themselves in a hurry of painting terrorism with saffron color.

Why?

A deep study inti the '*Saffron Terror*' case wil reveal a sinister and deep rooted conspiracy aimed at not only granting a leeway to Islamic terror outfits but, dangerously compromising India's national security.

Ever since the 2002 Gujrat Riots took place and the term '*Saffron Terrorism*' originated, it became an obsession for the Leftist Seculars in India to link any act of terror with Saffron organizations.

Suddenly, terrorists started becoming innocent citizens. It all began with the encounter of Ishrat Jahan in 2004. The Indian Government brushed aside intelligence reports and emphatically pronounced her as innocent.

Despite solid evidences provided by the US State Department, based on the confession of Davis Headley in July 2009, the Metropolitan Magistrate, S. P. Tamang pronounced it as a fake encoumter and sentenced honest police officers to eight years imprisonment.

Not only that, the magistrate also derived a term '*Encounter Specialist*' for the CID chief, Vanzara.

After eight long years, it was proved that Ishrat Jahan was indeed a terrorist and the encounter was genuine.

But, Tamangs role in fabricating a malicious report was never ever investigated.

The rat race for justifying acts of '*Saffron Terror*' began in 2006 with the Malegaon blasts followed by various terror attacks on Indian soil.

Gradually, it began getting fashionable for the Leftist Seculars to term any terror attack on Indian soil as an act of '*Saffron Terror*'.

But, every time, these attempts were thwarted by security experts, based on solid grounds, until the blasts took place in Malegaon in 2008.

Based on painstaking research, the author has derived a definitive conclusion for the motive behind the Malegaon 2008 terror attack.

The Malegaon 2008 blast was never a terror attack. It was a craftily executed plan by the Indian authorities only to justify their claims that '*Saffron Terror*' does exist.

The Malegaon blast took place at a secluded place which only indicates that it was not intended to kill people but simply make noise.

The Maharashtra ATS claimed that the bomb was fittied on a motorbike which was completely destroyed in the blast. Further, the engine and chassis numbers were also tampered with.

Yet, through forensic tests, which normally take around four days to complete, the ATS managed to retrieve the original number of the bike within 24 hours.

Thus, did the ATS know before the blast took place that the bike belonged to Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur?

Why didn't the ATS try to find out the user of the bike ever since Pragya had sold it in 2007 to Sunil Joshi?

Sunil Joshi was murdered in 2007. Did the ATS have any role in the killing of Sunil Joshi and stealing the bike from his possession?

After the Malegaon blasts, the ATS went on an arrest spree till they reached the doorsteps of the army.

On what grounds were Col. Purohit and his informer, Sudhakar Chaturvedi suspects?

Why Purohit's phone was tapped when there was no evidence against his involvement in the blast?

In order to frame Col. Purohit, Capt. Nitin Joshi and Shyam Apte were coerced to give false statements.

Why did the confession statement contain details of RSS links with Pakistan's ISI?

Why did Joshi's confession come on the eve of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks?

Did the ATS have prior knowledge that 26/11 was scheduled to take place in Mumbai?

The confession of Nitin Joshi states that Col. Purohit supplied RDX to Dr. Dev to carry out the Samjhauta blast.

Why was the role of this mythical Dr. Dev never probed by the ATS or NIA?

How did this Dr. Dev become Mr. Bhagwan in the NIA report two years later?

For over eight years, a serving army officer is languishing in jail for charges of supplying RDX for carrying out the Samjhauta Express blasts.

But, the simple fact is that, the blasts that rocked the Samjhauta Express were caused, not by RDX, but with an '*Improvised Explosive Device*' (IED).

Are the Maharashtra ATS, CBI and NIA investigators '*a bunch of idiots*' to not know the basic difference between RDX and IED?

Was the RDX allegedly supplied by Col. Purohit meant for the 26/11 Mumbai attacks?

It is a constitutional obligation that if the investigation does not file a chargesheet within 90 days, the accused are granted bail.

However, in this case, the NIA has kept this case in the loop for over 40 months and yet nobody, not even the media, has questioned the courts as to;

Why are the accused still in jail? ....and

Why have their bail applications not been heard?

Despite the NIA stating in their charge sheet that the investigations were '*botched up*' by the ATS and CBI, why weren't the concerned officers ever reprimanded?

These are serious questions which need answers from the Indian authorities.

These fourteen innocent people have spent over eight long years in jail and faced relentless tortures at the hands of corrupt police officers.

Yet, for eight years, these innocent people were branded as terrorists while, the men who colluded with the enemy, were hailed as martyrs.

Thankfully truth is prevailing now. All those accued of terror have come clean. The world has acknowledged that there is nothing called '*Saffron Terrorism*'.

The '*Saffron Terror*' case will certainly go down as the most disgraceful chapter in the anals of Indian history. Never before, has the government of any country conspired to implicate its own citizens in order to exonerate its sworn enemy from serious charges of abetting terrorism.

At a time when the whole world is standing united in its fight against terror, India will bow its head in utter shame for being the only country in the world which has abused its discretionary powers and mis-used its state machinery to exonerate Pakistan based terror outfits at the cost of its own citizens.

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Source

This information has been provided by a former officer of the Maharashtra ATS who was also a part of the '*Saffron Terror*' conspiracy.

The author does not vouch for the authenticity of the same. The reader may use his/her wisdom and be the best judge for themselves.

The Malegaon blast of September 2008 was not a terror attack but, a carefully executed plan by officers of the Maharashtra ATS.

After the serial blasts that rocked Malegaon in 2006 followed by terror attacks on the Samjhauta Express, Makka Masjid and Ajmer Dargah in 2007, the Indian Government came under intense questioning from the press and media for their slow pace of investigations.

But, the Indian leadership was reluctant to take action against Muslims accused in the terror attacks with the fear of losing a lucrative vote bank.

Towards the end of 2007, a high level meeting was called which was chaired by a very prominent political figure and a former Chief Minister of a central Indian state and was attended by several officers of the Maharashtra ATS of which this officer was one.

In this meeting, a decision was taken to implicate activists of Saffron organizations in all the terror attacks that took place between Malegaon 2006 and Ajmer 2007.

The names of Sunil Joshi and his associate Ramji Kalsanghra were also provided to the ATS by this influential political figure.

In December 2007, Sunil Joshi, an activist of the Hindu Jagran Manch, was murdered by the ATS and the LML Freedom bike was stolen from his possession.

The ATS later came to understand from details of the bike that it was owned by Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, a disciple of Sunil Joshi.

The engine number and chassis number of the bike were wiped off and the bike was modified to carry explosive devices.

Pragya Singh and Ramji Kalsanghra were then placed under constant surveillance by the Maharashtra ATS. Their movements were tracked round the clock.

In September 2008, officers of the Maharashtra ATS transported the bike to Malegaon and parked it outside the depot of Shakil Goods Company.

Immediately after the blast, the ATS sent the remains of the destroyed bike to the Nasik Forensic Laboratory for scientific analysis.

The Forensic Laboratory submitted a report within twenty four hours revealing details of the bike which the ATS knew before hand.

Thereafter, Pragya Singh was called to Mumbai on the pretext of questioning but, was illegally detained and forced to give a confession.

After securing Pragya Singh's arrest, the ATS set their sights on another potential target, Col. Prasad Purohit, an intelligence officer of the Indian Army.

The ATS had prior information from government sources that Col. Purohit was snooping on the activities of the Abhinav Bharat and thus tapped his phone to record sensitive information.

After that, Col. Purohit and his associate, Sudhakar Chaturvedi were abducted and forced into giving false confessions.

In the first week of November, Inspector Shekhar Badge of the Maharashtra ATS planted RDX at the residence of Sudhakar Chaturvedi in order to implicate him.

The traces of RDX found at Chaturvedi's house were then sent to the Kalina Forensic Laboratory in Mumbai for scientific tests.

Just days before the RDX sample reached Mumbai, the same officer from Nasik Forensic Laboratory, who tested Pragya Singh's bike, was transferred to Mumbai especially to test the RDX sample and submit a report.

On 23rd November, Pragya Singh, Col. Purohit and several others were placed under arrest and charged under the anti-terror law, MCOCA.

Two witnesses, Capt. Nitin Joshi and Shyam Apte, were coerced to give false statements against Col. Purohit. It was a caferully crafted statement in which the witnesses were made to state that 1. Col. Purohit was in possession of RDX and 2. The RSS has close links with ISI of Pakistan.

It was a masterplan keeping the 26/11 Mumbai attacks in mind. The imaginary RDX that Capt. Nitin Joshi saw in Col. Purohit's house was actually meant for the 26/11 attack.

On 26th November, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had planned to carry out a protest march at the Azad Maidan, Mumbai to protest against the arrests of Hindu activists.

The ATS received instructions to let hooligans infiltrate the protest march and start rioting. This would be followed by the terror attack of 26/11.

The eight terrorists hired to carry out the 26/11 attacks were indeed Pakistani nationals and members of the Lashkar e Taiba but, they were hired by the Indian leadership specially to carry out the 26/11 attacks.

The eight terrorists never came to Mumbai by a fishing trawler form Porbandar but, were staying in Mumbra for over a month and were given specific training by officers of the Maharashtra ATS.

The news of Ajmal Kasab's arrest flashed across television screens all over the country. The Maharashtra leadership was in a mess following Kasab's arrest. Thus, the NSG action scheduled for midnight was postponed till 10am the next day.

A fishing trawler was then towed from Porbandar to Mumbai after killing all fishermen on board to claim that the terrorists had come from Pakistan.

After the identity of the 26/11 attackers were revealed, the bodies of Ramji Kalsanghra and Sandeep Dange were hurriedly disposed off by the ATS as unidentified victims of the 26/11 attacks.

After the 26/11 conspiracy failed, the ATS was in a spot of bother as to where should the imaginary RDX found in Col. Purohit's house be used.

Thus, they linked the imaginary RDX to the Samjhauta Blasts without ascertaining the fact that the blasts that blew up the Samjhauta was caused by Phosphur and Sulphur based IED and not RDX.

By 2009, the '*Saffron Terror*' case began falling apart as many defence experts ridiculed the RDX theory of the ATS and many key witnesses like Capt. Nitin Joshi retracted from their statements.

The case was then handed over to the CBI which stumbled upon a godman named Swami Aseemanand who would also backtrack within two months.

Amidst this confusion, the US state department provided the Indian authorities with vital information about Asif Kasmani, the mastermind of the Samjhauta Blast.

Finally, the case was handed over to the NIA which sought permission to begin the investigations afresh.

The NIA conveniently ignored the evidence provided by the US State Department and stuck to the '*Saffron Terror*' theory of their political masters based on the false statement of Swami Aseemanand alone.

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Letter

Following is a letter written by Lt. Col. Shrikant Prasad Purohit to Shri Narendra Modi, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, in 2014;

Dear Sir,

My entire intelligence network which I had developed with my team has been used against me. Three of my registered intelligence operators are my co-accused and at least four of them are witnesses against me.

My efforts of three years have gone in vain. I must also mention here sir that the same ATS Maharashtra Police had invited me to impart training to them on subjects of SIMI and ISI (Student Islamic Movement of India and the Inter Services Intelligence of Pakistan) and letter to that effect were addressed to me and to my higher Headquarters.

My performance in the field of Counter Terrorism and Counter Intelligence, both in Kashmir and in Maharashtra is on record now.

With regards the counter terrorism, though I thoroughly enjoyed the professional hazards, I feel my acquaintance and overzealous commitment, besides truthful reporting of the intelligence gathered, has acted counter-productive and has made me getting falsely implicated in the case which was meticulously stage managed.

Therefore, my case is not just a matter of inadvertent injustice meted out to an individual officer who got trapped into a plot due to error of judgement or misinformation by a select few. It points to serious internal and external security threats faced by India.

I had time and again brought all these facts to the notice of all possible concerned ministers, former PM Manmohan Singh, former Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde and even the Defence Minister A.K.Antony.

But his appeals went unheeded. The reasons for this non-responsiveness could well be that the ATS Maharashtra were not the only players in stage managing and manipulating the case but it involved many important players.

For instance, I had apprised Manmohan Singh of how the case was being politicized by the President of NCP Sharad Pawar whose involvement in patronizing crime syndicates has been an open secret.

In fact, way back in October 1993, the Vohra Committee Report submitted by the former Union Home Secretary, N.N. Vohra had mentioned a study report on the problem of the criminalisation of politics and of the nexus among criminals, politicians and bureaucrats in India.

The report contained several observations made by official agencies on the criminal network which was virtually running a parallel government.

It also discussed criminal gangs who enjoyed the patronage of politicians, of all parties, and the protection of government functionaries.

It revealed that political leaders had become the leaders of mafia gangs. The name of Dawood Ibrahim was specifically mentioned as someone enjoying patronage from certain high level politicians.

The report states that some of these Syndicates also have international linkages, including the foreign intelligence agencies.

It also said that the Bombay Blast case and communal riots in Surat and Ahmadabad have demonstrated how the Indian underworld has been used by the Pak ISI and the latter's network in UAE to cause sabotage, subversion and communal tension in various parts of the country.

The investigations into the Bombay blast cases have revealed extensive linkages of the underworld in the various governmental agencies, political circles, business sector and the film world.

As per the Vohra Committee, these gangs had reportedly also made inroads into the military. It officially confirmed how over the years criminals had been elected to local bodies, Assemblies and even Parliament. The unpublished Annexures to the Vohra Report were believed to contain highly explosive material but were never made public.

In 1997, the Supreme Court recommended the appointment of a high level committee to ensure in-depth investigation into the findings of the N.N.Vohra Committee and to secure prosecution of those involved. But nothing came of it thus far.

Keeping all this in view, my words to you need to be seriously heeded. I feel very strongly, after following the sequence of events, that my apprehension does warrant rumination.

Given an opportunity many facts remain eager to get unearthed and unmasked. I apparently, have a lot to unmask. Therefore, keeping me in jail without trial and not giving me an opportunity to reveal what I claim to know is as dangerous as Government's wilful inaction on the explosive findings of Vohra Committee Report.

It is nearly six years that I have been in jail even though thus far he have not been convicted of any offense nor has the ATS managed to get any valid self indicting confession from me in relation to any of the charges despite inhuman torture.

No relief of any kind has come his way despite appeals to PM Manmohan Singh, the Army Chief as well as the Home Minister of India. I quote again from my letter of 30 May 2014 to you.

I remain the victim of perverted and unethical functioning, declined morality of the ATS, wherein they have even filed the SIMI and ISI presentations of official motive prepared by me as part of the charge sheet there by exposing me to the grave danger at the hands of the anti National Elements.

Indeed we live in a strange world whereby a known terrorist and mass murderer like Ajmal Kasab is convicted after due process of law, but the denial of due process trial to an Army Officer is not given even cursory attention by the 'Secular Brigade'.

Had our media not lost the habit of carrying out fair and independent investigations into the doings and mis-doings of government and other powerful lobbies, my plea for justice and warnings against wilful sabotage of India's intelligence networks would not have gone unheeded for 6 long years.

Lt. Col. Shrikant Prasad Purohit

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